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# **THE GRAPES OF WRATH**



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THE  
GRAPES OF WRATH  
A Tale of North and South

By  
MARY HARRIOTT NORRIS

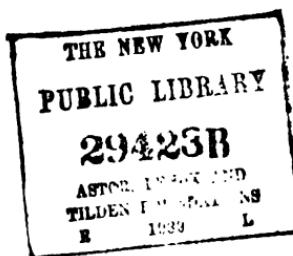
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To my Sister  
**KATE KERR NORRIS**

*"Love never denied Death, and  
Death will not deny Love"*

W Q R 19 FEB '36



## ILLUSTRATIONS

“The men then put their heads together” (*see page 84*),  
*Frontispiece*

“Mother and daughters, their arms wound about one another” . . . . . *facing page* 10

“Sylvester Rodman rode into the circle” . . . *facing page* 120

“Leaning on her cradle, Hannah watched him come”  
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“Welcome once more to Oakhurst, dear General Lee”  
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“Virginia found herself face to face with Captain Featherstone” . . . . . *facing page* 314



## I.

NATURE wore the resurrection smile of spring in the May of 1864, although the ploughshare of the Almighty was about to cut deeper furrows of grief in the hearts of women, North and South.

Cornelia Manners felt both the sweetness and hardness of nature as she lingered in her dooryard, waiting for the morning mail. She was praying, although her blue eyes, shining and tense, were staring down the street. Her hopes, her fears, her love, were embodied in a petition individual, particular, supreme; for her husband was in the army of the Potomac, and her son at Bermuda Hundred with General Butler.

The mail was due at eight, and it was already nine o'clock.

Mrs. Manners stepped out on the sidewalk, shading her eyes with her long, delicate hand. The trees met overhead as far as a distant bend in the street; and the half-grown, translucent leaves cast a greenish-golden, shadowy brilliance between the arch above and the red-dish loam underneath. A boy whom she had sent for the mail came running with a telegram. She watched him approach with a sigh of apprehension, and, when he handed her the yellow envelope, turned aside with the ever-present fear of a terrible catastrophe. A hot, choking sensation made her try to ease the narrow collar pressing against her throat.

"Where did you get this telegram?" she asked, as if it could not have been intended for her, although addressed to her.

"The operator ran out to give it to me on my way back from the office. Your father had already taken the mail. Shall I wait for an answer?"

She nodded acquiescently, and tore the message open. A shuddering thrill of relief chilled her as she read:

## The Grapes of Wrath

"Girls left yesterday. Expect to reach Washington to-day. Will wire further."

Its confirmation of news previously received by letter relieved her tension. She knew that the Virginia campaign had opened the day before, and that at any moment word might come of a battle; but the receipt of the telegram let her hope that the crossing of the Rapidan by the army of the Potomac had been peacefully effected. It struck her as indescribably pathetic that her husband should be marching towards the Rapi-dan, even while his nieces, to whom the despatch referred, were hastening north because the Virginian war centre threatened their home, which had suffered greatly in the campaign of 1863. And their father, her husband's eldest brother, was doubtless at this moment with Lee.

The Manners men had fought in the colonial wars, in the Revolution, in the Mexican War, in sallies against the Indians along the frontiers of the North-west. They had had a voice in colonial, state, and national legislation on almost every great subject. A score of them were recorded on the Revolutionary roster. During that perplexing and momentous period in which the thirteen original states were deciding on state or national sovereignty, the various branches of the family were bitterly divided. From the adoption of the Constitution to the Civil War, argument, feud, temporary compromise, or an iron silence when they came together, marked their attitude on such questions as state rights, slavery, the "Omnibus Bill," the Kansas-Nebraska bill, "border warfare," and the "Dred Scott decision." And, in harmony with their fealty to state rights or the Union, these sturdy Manners men were now fighting for their convictions in the Civil War, as they had fought in the colonial wars and the Revolution.

The children were to be the hostages of fraternal good will.

The four brothers were widely separated. Gordon, the eldest, had married a Virginian; and his plantation on the Rapidan was one of the most beautiful and highly cultivated in the state. Jared, who lived in Boston, had recently been elected a United States senator. Robert had gone to California when gold was discovered there. Only Rufus, the youngest brother, "Judge Manners," still remained in the county of his birth.

The history of the Boudinots, the family of Judge Manners's wife, was no less picturesque and national; but the Boudinots were a family without sons, and Cornelia, the judge's wife, was their only daughter.

A short distance from Mulholland, where Rufus Manners had lived ever since his marriage, stood the Manners and the Boudinot homesteads.

Cornelia's parents in one, and Deacon Manners, widowed and alone in the other, led the placid existence of Northern planters in the fifties and sixties. Daily on either side of the fence which marked the boundary between the two estates, in rain or shine, the two old men pursued an ever-new and never-ending argument; for Deacon Manners was a Republican, and Mr. Alexander Boudinot, as he was almost invariably called, was a Democrat.

While waiting for her father, Mrs. Manners went in search of her youngest son, a boy of four.

"Where is my little John?" she called out through the wide, cool hall and up the stairs. "Where is mamma's precious little John?" Her face, divested for the moment of care, was only tender and expectant.

"Here I is!" And, sliding by the baluster to the landing midway, the boy looked down into her face with a glance of mingled glee and admiration. If his eyes rested a moment on his mother, his tiny features kindled with adoring love.

She held out her arms.

## The Grapes of Wrath

He mounted the baluster again, and, like a ray of light, reaching the bottom, sprang to her breast. She held him close, and he patted her cheek caressingly and sympathetically.

"Doesn't we love each other, mamma!" He held up his face with a little giggle which brought a faint dimple in one cheek, and then burrowed his head with its straight light brown hair into her neck.

"Have you got a letter this morning?" he asked, looking pensively serious.

"Not yet, but grandpa will come soon now with the mail. Let us go watch for him." And, taking John's hand, she went out of doors again. A whiff of syringa-scented breeze touched her soothingly.

There was the sound of wheels, and a moment later a much-spattered buggy, with the top down, and sagging on its springs, drew up. John ran to the gate, and Cornelia followed.

Mr. Manners was a plain-looking old man, but with a keen, tender face.

"Well, daughter," holding out his sunburned hand and taking hers in a fatherly, lingering clasp, "there are no letters for you; but there is no battle on yet, thank God. I have a letter from Gordon, though, saying his girls ought to reach us on Wednesday. It has been delayed in coming through, however; and they may not have been able to carry out their plans."

She spoke of the telegram.

"They ought to be here day after to-morrow, then. How long it seems since I have seen Gordon's children!"

They walked towards the house; and Mr. Manners sat down in an arm-chair on the piazza, so that he could watch his horse and enjoy the breeze. As he did so, he compressed his lips, sighed, and gazed absent-mindedly up the street. "When Gordon wrote, he was about to

join Lee for active duty. I waited in the village after the mail came in, to get the latest bulletin. It looks as if Grant would be able to carry out his plan and push through the Wilderness without much trouble. Warren's corps crossed the Rapidan at Germanna Ford yesterday. They are halting at Old Wilderness tavern. Sedgwick's corps crossed at Germanna Ford, too. Hancock crossed at Ely's Ford. There must be a hundred thousand of our men on the south side of the Rapidan this morning."

Not a word yet concerning his son, Judge Manners, who was a major under Warren. Cornelia knew perfectly well that there was news of him, but, with a woman's patient fortitude, waited. At last her silence was rewarded.

"The latest thing on the bulletins was the list of promotions."

Mrs. Manners's eyes filled. She could hear her heart beat. She put her arm around John.

"Rufus has been made colonel of his regiment!" His lips set in a straight, smiling line; and he looked triumphantly at his daughter. "I came just as fast as I could to tell you; but it seems to me that all Mulholland turned out to shake hands with me. I didn't know I had so many friends."

"Colonel Rufus Manners!" repeated his wife, softly.

"What does that mean, mamma?" asked John.

"It means that papa has been such a good soldier that he will hereafter command a thousand men." She counted off the hundreds on her fingers, to impress John.

The little fellow seized his grandfather's umbrella, shouldered it, and paraded the piazza muttering, "Bum, bum, bum."

"Rufus deserved it," continued the old man. "I have had a great ambition for him, too, ever since the

Confederates made Gordon a general. It is tough, though, to have to feel that my oldest and youngest sons are about to face each other like mortal enemies. I miss Rufus more and more. His going might have seemed less hard if his mother had lived. I might not have felt quite so bereft." He relapsed into silence. Looking up wistfully, he said: "Gordon's girls had better come to me. They will brighten up the old house."

"I have a better plan, father." She began stroking his tumbled grey hair. "Let the girls stop here long enough to rest, and then they and John and I will all come home to you for the summer. Wouldn't you like that?"

He had the kind of unselfishness which in a man is a great big, silent, undemonstrative fact; and her self-suppression touched him deeply, for he knew that her whole being rested at this time on her nearness to the post-office. Rising slowly, and with a look of comprehending tenderness at his daughter, he reached out his hand to John for the umbrella,—a shabby cotton affair, twisted with bulging irregularity. The boy, astride of it, caracoled towards him with a flourish of horsemanship.

"Can't you stay to dinner?" inquired Mrs. Manners, solicitously.

"No: I have fifty men at work in the cranberry bogs. I'll drive back towards night, though, for the news; and I'll take supper with you. Don't lose heart, Cornelia." He laid his hand on John's head. "God bless you, my little man," he said thoughtfully, and, turning away, descended the steps with ageing stiffness.

## II.

THE region of the Rappahannock was the scene of much severe fighting prior to 1864. Along the main tributary and its branches were fought the battles of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville ; and the neighbouring plantations suffered, in consequence, the full horrors of raids, the investment of homes occupying possible strategic points, and all those perils and uncertainties incident to flying bombs, prowling bands of soldiery, deserting slaves, and the search for refugees. The Gordon Manners' estate stood in the very heart of this district.

Gordon Manners had married a Copley ; and, although he represented that class of genial slaveholders who were in many senses fathers as well as masters to their slaves, he was as tenacious as his wife in upholding slavery, and as hopeful as she of the final success of the Southern cause. But, after the campaign of 1863, he decided to send his daughters to their Northern relatives ; and, passes having been obtained just before that protracted and wonderful final struggle between the army of Northern Virginia and the army of the Potomac, the young women prepared to leave Gordon Hall, which was already stripped of much of its original dignity and beauty.

Although Mrs. Manners' courage did not falter, the parting from her daughters strained her endurance to the utmost ; and the last day of the sisters in their home was full of pathos.

Virginia, the elder daughter, had a dominating, impetuous nature, and an air of genial importance occasioned by a self-glorifying consciousness seldom deserting her under the most trying circumstances. From her own point of view, her life was a drama ; and, no matter how trivial the incidents, she was absorbed in

playing her part or rehearsing its details to others. She often failed, in consequence, to perceive the delicate ironies of a situation, but, on the other hand, commanded attention and the admiration of her inferiors.

Patty, the younger sister, was reticent, and with a capacity for great moral endurance. Her pride of birth was intense. Her manner was modest and retiring, although inwardly, towards almost everybody, she condescended.

As they sat alone at the breakfast table, the thoughts of both the girls were busy with the coming departure.

"No more days, sister, like that when we stood on the heights of Fredericksburg and saw the stone wall against which those blundering Northerners sacrificed twelve thousand lives in vain."

Patty's eyes flashed. "They had no General Lee! How proud I am to think that at this very table I have ladled many a plate of soup for him!"

"And I have poured him many a cup of coffee!" Virginia laid her hand impressively on the silver urn over which she was presiding, in the absence of their mother, who had fallen asleep after a night of weeping.

An aged coloured woman, with a benevolent, wrinkled face and ruminating, sorrowful eyes, entered the room.

"Yo' mammy say, missies, yo' mus' please come right upstairs to see 'bout dem bags. Deys des come f'm de laundry, an' yo' t'ings is all ready to pack."

Springing from the breakfast table, the sisters started arm in arm through the long, wide hall.

"Doesn't our place make you think a little of Aunt Cornelius's, sister?" asked Patty.

"Oh, yes," replied Virginia, with some hauteur. "Those New Jersey houses fret me, though. They seem a cross between our Southern mansions and the Puritan belongings of Uncle Jared. They are so plain inside. There are so few servants. There is so little going on,

I expect I'm bound to make myself disagreeable up there."

"It never taxes me to be amiable or forbearing when I'm among — among" —

Virginia playfully put her hand over Patty's mouth. "You were going to say your inferiors, you haughty, naughty little Southerner,—you know you were,— and you mustn't speak in that way of father's people. They are our kin."

"I stand by our kin as loyally as you, Virginia. I wouldn't, even in my own heart, call a soul belonging to me an inferior. But some are more congenial."

"If it weren't for her politics, I'd love Aunt Cornelia dearly," said Virginia. "I reckon I can't help loving her, any way. I shouldn't be afraid to compare her with our first Richmond ladies."

Patty's indulgent glance was discriminating. She made no reply.

They found their mother assorting, with needless and loving repetition, their meagre outfit for the journey, the conditions of which, as stated in the passport, precluded luggage. With feminine sophistry, she had devised a means for them to possess, on their arrival in Washington, a few additional garments beside those they wore; and it was for this purpose that four stout linen bags had been prepared. Each of the young women expected to carry two of them attached to a belt and suspended under the voluminous crinoline then in vogue.

The bags were now packed, and several laughable and preliminary tests attempted to the satisfaction of all.

When these simple preparations were completed, the mother, realising as if with fresh vividness the nearness of the separation, drew each young face towards her and kissed it. She was very pale. Her eyes burned with nervous brightness. Her hands were restless and fever-

ish. Her voice was thin ; and the strange, inimitable accent and pronunciation of the Southern lady, akin to those of the various negro dialects of the slave states, and yet widely variant, sounded neither refined nor piquant, unsoftened by the throaty, velvety drawl which was their usual accompaniment.

But, if Mrs. Manners' voice and speech conveyed an unpleasant impression, she possessed a commanding and agreeable presence. Her bearing and expression indicated a nature able to cope with the perils and emergencies incident to war ; and her blended suavity, affectionateness, and dignity, when talking with her daughters, revealed a temperament mingling both stern and gentle traits.

When the mother and daughters, their arms wound about one another, left the house and walked back and forth over the lawn under the magnificent trees for an hour of confidence and counsel, the sight was not without its mournfulness and beauty to the tender-hearted and child-bereft black mammy lingering in the big, square chamber, and looking down upon the scene.

Early in the afternoon, various neighbourhood families gathered at Gordon Hall ; and a little later two Confederate veterans arrived, detailed by General Manners as an escort for his daughters.

The little company, attended by several house servants and mounted on horseback, expected to set out at sunset, and, by hard riding, hoped in a few hours to cover the route between Orange Court-house and the Union lines, the only hazardous portion of the journey, owing to the presence of troops on both sides of the Rapidan.

The coloured folk mingled with the family and their guests at the supremely interesting moment of departure ; and their good-byes, uttered in tender, unctuous ejaculations, made the leave-taking more impressive.



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The neighbourhood ladies, in calico,— some of them with thorns for hair-pins and others wearing patched shoes, but each adorned with her costliest jewels and comporting herself in her most ceremonious manner,— added an air of state, the reflection of the pride, courage, and breeding marshalled for an occasion which marked an epoch in the community.

The departure of the young ladies represented the breaking up of their homes to the women, for most of them intended to be in Richmond within a month.

The sun disappeared behind the Blue Ridge Mountains, softly defined in the warm, hazy atmosphere of the May evening.

Virginia had already mounted; and Patty, conscious of the heavy weight under her full skirts, hesitated before making the spring. A dozen women, over whose faces flitted expressions of humour, sadness, and affection, clapped their hands when she settled down securely in her saddle. A chorus of warm-hearted praise heightened the colour and spirit of the girls.

Mrs. Manners, with stern yet smiling composure, stood beside Virginia's horse, holding the hand of her older daughter, but watching her younger with repressed solicitude and talking defiantly and hopefully of the approaching campaign. The other ladies adjured the girls to stand up for their colours and show their spirit on all occasions. The soldiers, with patched and faded uniforms, and with careworn, desperate faces, chivalrously encouraged everybody.

A cool breeze sprang up from the river. A whippoor-will pierced the air with its poignant cry. The reflection of the sunset vanished; and, in that subtle, immediate change in the daylight heralding the approach of night, Mrs. Manners instinctively released Virginia's bridle, and, stepping aside, mutely and unconsciously gave the signal for the start.

In the midst of an involuntary and impressive silence the cavalcade set out; but, as the young women rode under the arches of their native trees, they looked back, and saw their mother in tears.

Virginia suddenly broke into song. Patty and the soldiers joined. The group on the lawn took up the refrain. Mrs. Manners, in a clear, high soprano, trembling, but triumphant, lifted her voice above the others; and the bluffs along the river gave back the echoes.

“Way down upon de Swanee Ribber,  
Far, far away,  
Dere’s wha’ my heart is turning eber,  
Dere’s wha’ de old folks stay.”

The travellers dashed forward along the avenue of oaks, the clatter of their horses’ hoofs mingling with the swelling melody of the song. A turn in the avenue down the bluff, from which the house commanded the river, screened them from sight; and they relapsed into silence.

Up from the teeming earth came the damp, sweet pungence of growing things. The breeze fluttered the young, airy foliage of the forest trees fringing the plank road. The bloom of beeches, the verdant tinge over vast tracts planted with tobacco, the fragrance of apple-blossoms, and the aromatic scent from acres of peach-trees the limbs and leaves of which, pink-tinted, seemed still to hoard the blush of the sunset, lent a beguiling deceptiveness to a region in which at that very moment bivouacked two hundred thousand soldiers.

A few miles distant, in a little room at Culpeper, sat General Grant, in grave discussion with his staff. At Orange Court-house, only seventeen miles from Culpeper, lay the weary but vigilant hero of the South, with rifle-pits commanding every ford of the Rapidan for a distance of twenty miles, and concerning whose first movement in the new campaign the conqueror at Don-

elson and Vicksburg, on the very eve of battle, was uncertain. General Grant had still his first victory to win in the Old Dominion, and General Lee had thus far never lost a battle in his native state.

The travellers after a while came into a district from which every trace of its former opulence had disappeared. Solitude and desolation looked through the windowless sockets of deserted houses. After they had passed through this war-stricken region, groves of scraggy pines and scrub-oaks began to infringe upon trees of nobler growth. The hooting of an owl or the purling of a brook occasionally invaded the silence.

The road grew rougher and wilder; for they were skirting that famous region known as the Wilderness, with the hope of crossing at a ford above the lines of the two armies, and, in this way, possibly avoiding contact with straggling bands of soldiers.

None of the ordinary reposed features of a forest marked this dangerous tract. Its recesses covered abandoned mines a century old and overgrown and concealed by a dense tangle of bushes, vines, and trees. Some of these mines impinged upon the wood-tracks which the party followed; and their safety, in the darkness, depended almost entirely upon the instinct and footing of the horses. Occasionally a stone, loosening in a hidden and decaying shaft, fell, striking the water far below, and warning the travellers of the nearness of forsaken subterranean depths.

The lofty forests originally clothing the entire region had been replaced, after repeated fellings, by a chaparral of low-limbed pines, dwarfish and straggling chincapins, black jack and other scrubby growths of oak, under which flourished a maze of hazel and low-lying shrubbery, matted together by grape and blackberry vines, and horribly suggestive of crawling life and hostile ambush.

## The Grapes of Wrath

The barren loneliness of this region constituted its present safety for the young women ; and, although they ached from the rough riding, not a murmur of surprise or pain escaped them when their horses stumbled upon the sharp rocks continually jagging the scanty earth or forded the numerous small streams intersecting their route.

Towards midnight the wood-track led into a more open road, although still in the forest. Trees of loftier height began to replace the stunted growth. Patches of fine turf occasionally offered a welcome footing to the weary horses. Chestnut, shagbark, cypress, and oak spread an elevated and noble canopy or enclosed park-like openings of grass and daisies.

The increasing dignity and beauty of the scene and the solemn stillness of the night strung the spirit of the young Virginians to a lofty heroism. No fear mingled with the regret they experienced in approaching the ford, the passage of which would bring them near the Union lines.

As they came out on the bank of the stream, the limpid blueness of their native skies, crowded with stars deeply golden and brilliant in the clear, moist air of the tide-water country, gave them a sinking poignancy of homesickness.

The elder sister, reining in her horse, turned its head south, and with an expressive and graphic gesture exclaimed : " Farewell, Virginia ! Farewell, my own dear people ! Farewell, brave boys in grey ! "

And Patty, in whose delicate face burned a sudden ardor of feeling, cried out : " Success to the Confederacy ! Three cheers for General Lee ! Cheer, all of you ! "

One of the veterans shook his head warningly. " Be cautious, my dear young lady. Our voices would carry a great distance on such a night as this. And now

forward! for, if we are not at the appointed place in time, the ambulance in which you are to ride the remainder of the night may be diverted to other purposes."

The soldiers turned towards the river, and in another minute all were crossing a stream the peaceful waters of which were so soon to flow past bloody battlefields.

An hour later the party were safe within the Union lines; and the sisters with some difficulty, owing to the bags, now wearisomely heavy, suspended under their skirts, mounted the ambulance in waiting. The Confederate soldiers exchanged courtesies with the Unionists, the servants bade their young mistresses an affectionate farewell, and the truce, graphically indicative, after all, of those deep, fraternal currents flowing underneath sectional hostilities, ended.

The young women disposed themselves as comfortably as circumstances would permit in the only safe conveyance accessible; and the ambulance, with its military escort, turned North as the last hour of the night yielded to the dawn of the new day.

When Virginia and Patty Manners arrived at their destination, which was a wayside tavern just within the borders of the District of Columbia, the sunlight was touching the uplands with an edge of gold; and the day, which was to be one of historic memories to all Americans, was at that moment of its progress invested with dramatic interest to the young girls purely on their own account.

The Confederates who had accompanied them to the lines were old men. The cavalrymen riding beside the ambulance were young. As the first glimmer of that beautiful May morning began to make its revelations, Virginia at once embraced a situation full of those possibilities dear to the Southern girl's romantic ideals.

Here were four young men, although her deadly foes. Here were Patty and herself, the belles of Orange

County. Virginia rejoiced over the opportunity to skirmish for "The Cause" in a purely feminine capacity.

"Sister!" lightly touching Patty, who was nodding and starting from her uncomfortable sleep and dreams.

Patty opened her blue eyes, clouded with fatigue and semi-consciousness.

"I have forgotten my powder. Feel in your pocket for yours."

Patty mechanically slipped a cloth saturated with powder into Virginia's hand; and the older girl, with the nonchalance of long habit and universal custom, began to whiten a face sufficiently adorned with its own beauty, even under such trying circumstances.

The officer at her side stole a furtive glance at the proceeding, disgust over the transformation mingling with admiration for the freedom and unconscious openness of the operation.

Presently, like an Indian in his war-paint and with a white haughtiness,—deliberate, amusing, and soul-compelling,—Virginia scrutinised her escort.

The officer challenged her with a cold, mechanical stare, which touched her aggressiveness as a spark touches the tinder.

"I perceive that you have never seen action, sir." And her glance included with imperious scorn the fresh uniforms of the soldiers. In reality, her heart was bleeding for the ragged veterans from whom she had so recently parted.

A young fellow, with a full, mischievous blue eye, smiled roguishly, and retorted, "We are on the field of Flodden now."

The officer commanded silence; but Virginia, instinctively and impulsively, rewarded the chivalric soldier with a kindling glance. The powder, notwithstanding her spirit and provocativeness, ruled the squad.

Patty, now wide-awake, but both offended and irri-

tated, looked straight ahead with chilling composure. The rising day etched her handsome profile against the background of hemlocks growing along the road; and, like beauty, she seemed her own excuse for being.

As they approached the tavern, the young women beheld their uncle Jared Manners standing on the porch. Their Aunt Anne was with him. As Virginia saw her aunt, she had a realising sense of fashions which struck her feminine convictions as new and desirable. Anger filled her breast towards a Northern relative who could present the appearance Mrs. Manners made—and some of the first ladies of the Confederacy wearing calico!

The gown Virginia herself wore was made in 1861, and was much the worse for constant use; and the costumes in her heavy bags were of muslin, covered with darns so fine and numerous that they made a lacework pattern in themselves.

The ambulance having come to a halt, and the officer and one of his men standing ready to assist the young women in a necessary leap, and a mortal terror of vanity and pride clutching at the hearts of the girls, lest, the strings breaking, the bags should fall and undergo confiscation, and also reveal their stress of poverty, they gathered their spring and nerve together, like divers in some swimming contest, and plunged.

Patty, bags and all, alighted like a bird possessed of a secret principle of buoyancy; but Virginia, through some fatal awkwardness at the last moment, stumbled, and fell heavily into the averting arms of Captain Featherstone, who for one brief second had as near and bewildering a view of the warm brightness of her black eyes as ever Uncle Toby had of those of the widow Wadman. Like Sterne's hero, the captain was the worse for the encounter.

Virginia, alas! regained her footing and composure

only to perceive herself in the centre of a heterogeneous, tumbled mass of slippers and petticoats, ribbons and handkerchiefs, as well as various other articles of woman's attire, lying in dusty and discouraging confusion in the much-travelled road.

Flushing with confusion, but with a glance of mingled railly and scorn, she turned upon Captain Featherstone.

"I should suppose, sir, your military drill would render you more skilful. See what trouble you have made. I thank you, however, for your undoubted kind intention to assist me; and I beg you will order one of those men"—nodding towards the soldiers as though they were the offending dust itself—"to gather up my belongings and carry them inside."

Captain Featherstone pursed his lips. A twinkle shot from his eye, and disappeared. He assumed the rôle of culprit without demur, and obeyed.

Virginia now extended her hands to Mrs. Manners, who had come forward to meet the travellers, and, falling upon that lady's neck, kissed her effusively.

"Well, little woman, here we are at last!" And Senator Manners gathered Patty tenderly within his arm, and walked towards the porch with her. "Are things getting pretty hot in the Old Dominion?"

"We would gladly have remained, Uncle Jared. We came away against our wishes, and my home can never be either too hot or too cold for me."

"That sounds just like Gordon. When did you see your father last?"

"On Sunday." There were tears in Patty's eyes. "He is with General Lee on the Rapidan."

Mr. Manners sighed. His face grew careworn and serious.

"Is Uncle Rufus still in the army?" asked Patty.

"He is with General Grant. He has just been made colonel of his regiment. And a despatch received an

hour ago at ‘The Hawk,’ here,” pointing to the tavern, “says that our troops began crossing the river at midnight. Did you learn anything of Lee’s movements before you left, my dear?”

Patty stared at him with a clear astonishment and indignation which made her appear ten years older. “I couldn’t tell, Uncle Jared, however much I knew. But, oh, I’m sorry, sorry, that Uncle Rufus is with General Grant. I had hoped his time had expired, and that our kin represented but one side in this dreadful war. And, of course, uncle, there is really only one side!”

“It is what we should all prefer to think, my girl. But, now that you have come North, you must try to have the grace and the wisdom, too, to speak respectfully, or not at all, of Northern sentiment and conviction.”

Patty regarded her uncle with a kind of naïve, resistant indignation ; but his expression was uncompromising. She repressed herself, but her heart beat violently ; and she longed to break away, and run in the direction of Gordon Hall.

Mr. and Mrs. Mannet both felt too relieved to gain possession of their nieces at such a critical moment to allow their loyalty to obscure their joy. They insisted upon Captain Featherstone breakfasting with them ; and the young man, proving to be of antecedents sufficiently good to pass the muster of Patty’s approval, and the war in general, as well as the grave possibilities of that terrible day, being kept in the background, out of consideration for the weary, homesick girls, the breakfast passed off with a fine display of comradeship.

When the cavalrymen parted company with the travellers, Virginia had recorded, in a memory tenacious of details, the names and records of her escorts, and with a secret, coquettish hope that the chances and dangers incident to war would permit her to seize advantage of her successful skirmish and assault.

### III.

DURING the night which terminated so auspiciously for the young Virginians that momentous forward movement of the Union forces, destined to culminate in the surrender of Lee, began.

Along the southern bluffs of the Rapidan the divisions of Ewell, Hill, and Longstreet, watched and waited for the Northern advance. Rifle-pits commanded the fords. Intrenchments protected the hills. Back of the Confederates stretched the Wilderness, region of swamp and tangle, of vines and brushwood, region of coverts of gloom and confusion of forest.

General Lee's precautionary genius had ordered a survey of the entire tract ; and the spring of 1864 found him acquainted with its roads, its cart-tracks, its deserted mines, its network of streams rising in swamps and seeking the rivers by innumerable and devious windings. Whether General Grant should attack him on the right or on the left, the jungle of the Wilderness would be his ally against the Northern general's overwhelming numbers. The impending conflict would be between finesse and territory on one side, strength and tenacity on the other.

Grant, simple, watchful, scornful of manœuvre; the coils of his vast army of six hundred thousand men, concentric, doubling and folding its python lengths down the Valley of the Shenandoah, across the cotton belt, along the James, south of Petersburg and Richmond, stretching forth neck and head on the north shore of the Rapidan,—roused from its winter sleep on the 3d of May,—crawled forward, hungry and vigilant, and circling inwardly and south towards its prey.

The Union army crossed at the lower fords, ten miles below Ewell's lines. Signal fires warned the alignment of Confederate corps on the hillside of that

long procession, obscured by the night, but sure to strike somewhere between the Rapidan and Richmond.

The soft murmur of the wind answered to the tread of the army. The forest waved in the dry spring air; and those tens of thousands advanced with the same glad energy and spirit with which De Soto and his followers plunged into the wilds of the Mississippi, in search of the fountain of perpetual youth.

The ground in every direction was seamed and scarred. Tangled undergrowth concealed excavations long unused. The soil was rocky or furrowed or spongy from hidden springs.

It was through this desolate region that General Grant hoped to press, until in a more open country he could meet Lee to better advantage. The night of the 4th of May found his entire army on the south side of the Rapidan, but it also found it facing the possibility of a battle in the Wilderness.

At daybreak the next morning the vast army started hopefully forward, its supreme objective to clear the Wilderness before nightfall.

Suddenly there was a roar of guns, and the broken, impetuous, intermittent trampling of soldiers over brambles and through jungles of weeds and bushes interwoven with vines. A sky of smoke hung dense and stifling under the canopy of leaves. The noise and confusion increased. The skirmish was becoming a battle.

Along the roads and through the forest of scrub-oak and pine encroaching on every hand, and in the ravines and through the swamps and creeks and rivulets, and on the edge of pits yawning from dark and lonesome caves and wells of stagnant water, Lee forced his first issue with the Army of the Potomac under General Grant.

From noon till dark the battle raged in that lonesome, gruesome strip of forest between the Orange turnpike and the Orange plank-road.

The forces which had been marching along the Germanna Ford road, along the turnpike, along the plank-road, arrested in their course, caught in the Wilderness, repeated the bloody scenes of Chancellorsville. Beside the turnpike lay the dead horses of their artillery, the guns in Confederate hands. Troops advancing through the thickets had been struck in front, behind, on the flank; and at nightfall three thousand of Warren's men lay dead in the forest, and his main force had fallen back in front of the turnpike, but covering the desolate inn which sheltered the man in whose hand was the gigantic hammer with which he had begun that day to beat a history out of life.

Although a halt had been forced upon the Union army, it was not defeated. Two mighty wrestlers had but experimented with their strength.

The Army of the Potomac, instead of being sundered, remained compact, bone of bone, sinew of sinew, iron will of iron will still.

When night fell, the two hosts lay on their arms. The dead lay hidden in the ravines, the thickets, and the swamps.

The man of destiny during seven peaceful hours slept profoundly in the old tavern. At four o'clock the next morning, calm, hopeful, determined, he made a breakfast of cucumbers and coffee, padded his person with twenty-three cigars, drew on his yellowish gloves, and watched the movement of his men.

Out from the depths of thickets all that day burst the crackling thunder of musketry. Over the green of May played the fires of battle. Behind trees and bushes crouched soldiers. In copses of hazel lurked death. Stumbling like wounded animals of the forest, the Confederates panted in retreat, driven back by their fierce, victorious hunters a mile and a half upon their trains and artillery.

Massed by General Meade, the Union troops established a new line. Like a fleet besieging, back and forth in front of them moved the brigade of Colonel Manners, keeping the line clear while they threw up breastworks of logs.

A lull followed the confusion and uproar of hours,—the poise in the tide of battle when it is at the full. Then, at the head of his forces, Lee rushed forward with the corps of Hill and Longstreet to within a hundred yards of those watchful thousands behind their breastworks. They fired. They advanced.

The sun cast long streaks of golden light under the trees, beneath the copses. A fire in the woods danced around and up the trees, twisted the brambles, ate up the vines, and crept towards the breastworks. As the Confederates attacked, the fire tasted the logs, flared up, curled over towards the Unionists ; and the wind, like a fan in the hand of fate, waved those crackling, lurid, feathery flames in the faces of Meade's troops, and shrouded them in smoke. Driven by heat and fire, by musket and bayonet, they yielded, turning their faces towards Chancellorsville as the Confederate banners crowned their blazing breastworks.

But General Grant's army, innumerable, like the hordes of Central Asia, forever pressing forward, made good the withdrawal ; for Carroll, with his brigade at a run and cheering in the onrush, swept the enemy back, and regained the breastworks.

At last, spent with the heat, the fatigue, the hindrances of the forest, both armies suspended action.

When night fell, Lee still held his opponents in the Wilderness ; but Grant, with the mighty, unbroken hammer of the Army of the Potomac in his vigilant hand, was ready to strike again.

For every minute of twenty-four hours of fighting, twenty-five brave men had fallen.

Those who, on that second fatal night, slept never to waken, slept hardly less dreamlessly than those who, a few hours later, would march towards the North Anna. The great general slumbered like an infant on his camp-bed, the private slept on the bare earth ; and the dreadful night had no terrors for either. Yet above them the wind howled and moaned through the wide reaches of the forest. Fires wrapped the trunks of scarred, bald trees, flaring like torches of death above the swamps and jungles. The burnt bodies of the dead lay uncared for in the thickets and along the roadsides. The wounded, who had been overlooked, tortured with pain, dragged their broken limbs and ebbing life by bloody trails hither and thither. Blood soaked into the dry earth or flaunted its crimson sign on shreds of flag and uniform. The odor of carrion filled the air with reek and horror.

But this battle of two days, the strangest in its surroundings known to modern history, was ended. The battle which no man saw, the battle which scores of thousands heard,—this wonderful drawn battle, whose ebbs and surges were like the unseen roar and lashing of a subterranean, angry ocean, had been fought ; and its only results were the tens of thousands who lay dead or wounded in the forest, and Grant's ability to still push forward towards Richmond. Upon his vision that night, like spectres of warning and disappointment, McClellan and Hooker and Burnside might have risen ; but in every man's life there are periods freighted with favourable destiny, and the heroic consciousness rises to such moments, and neither past defeat nor present discouragement can frighten. Like Wallenstein, Grant had asked his question freely of the Future ; and she had breathed into his spirit the assurance of victory.

As if by common consent, when day dawned upon those scores of thousands bivouacking in the jungle,

both great generals shunned the slaughter of a third day's battle in the Wilderness.

A forward movement set in.

The thousands of canvas-covered wagons of the Northern army started. The broken ranks of the infantry closed together, ready to march after nightfall.

Meanwhile Anderson, Longstreet's successor, and under order from General Lee, withdrew his corps, and formed it in readiness for marching.

Night filtered into the recesses of the chaparral. As soon as the Wilderness was wrapped in darkness sufficient to conceal the more open spaces, each commander, in ignorance of his opponent's plan of action, started in the same direction south-east of the battle-ground. Along the Brock road advanced the brave Warren with his corps towards Spottsylvania Court-house, fifteen miles ahead; but west of him, and along a parallel road, and shorter, marched the Confederates.

Throughout that beautiful Saturday during which forward movements for both armies were in progress, the wounded, who had lain undiscovered on the field in the suffering hours of the night, were cared for. Trenches were dug, and the dead buried by hundreds. The swamps and streams, which the day before had glimmered dark and bloody, caught the sunlight sifting through the foliage, and sparkled like an infant's eye with the happy unconsciousness of tragedy. The prosaic hubbub of feeding, the rumble of moving artillery, the striking of tents, the hurrying hither and thither of officers to headquarters, the care of ammunition and rifles, the marching and discipline of thousands destined soon to die, the hilarity of soldiers strung to such excitement and expectation that death could not sadden them, the repression and concentration of the ever-growing ranks of slaves into some kind of order and usefulness, and the gradual forward movement of all the vast

equipment and numbers of a gigantic army lent an air of gayety and intensity of life to a field that must ever rank among those stupendous desolations of war from the carnage of which springs the birth of epochs in individual and national history.

Throughout the day and late into the night the Wilderness was astir with life.

But, as that solemn darkness between midnight and dawn thickened, silent spaces in the great forest settled into their final desolation. Breastworks and rifle-pits were left for the winds, the rains, the purifying air, the fertilizing earth, to conceal or rehabilitate. An awful stillness took possession of thickets and wood-tracks, ravines and patches of bog, yawning mines that had echoed with the rattle of musketry, the groans of the dying, the shouts of advancing battalions.

And yet somewhere in those dark glades, unfound in the tangle of bushes and vines, lay soldiers too feeble to speak, whose names would appear on that terrible Union register of twenty-nine thousand, four hundred and ten of killed, wounded, and missing.

## IV.

WHEN Carroll's brigade rushed forward to retake the breastwork of blazing logs, on the right flank of that torrent of patriotic manhood swept a company of volunteers whose captain's ringing cheers and impetuous leadership carried them forward to the crown of the contested position. When the logs were taken and held, the company was without its captain.

A few hundred yards beyond the knoll where General Grant sat on a stump and whittled or walked back and forth and smoked while the battle of the Wilderness drew dangerously near headquarters, stood a growth of oak and locust interspersed with dwarf pine. Over the trees and interlacing their branches, coiling around their trunks and sprawling on the ground, rambled a luxuriant mass of wild grape-vine and Virginia creeper. The trees surrounded the shaft of an iron mine unworked for a quarter of a century ; and the vines had hung many a fantastic loop from tree to tree, forming, from the ground to the nearest branches, a continuous, leafy roof, entirely hiding the shaft and the rim of earth encircling it.

When Captain Haldane, of Carroll's brigade, fell, he knew nothing further till he saw the stars shining upon a scene of death and confusion in the midst of which he was lying. His left arm and collar-bone were broken ; but, by repeated though intermittent efforts, he crawled into the forest, and, feeling his way in the darkness, crept under the trees and vines surrounding the shaft.

Exhausted with the effort, he again lost consciousness. When he opened his eyes a second time, the gloom and silence appalled him. He ran his hand as far as he could reach around the spot where he was lying, but could make out nothing except the cool dampness of the earth.

A horrible fear momentarily overpowered him. He fancied he was lying on ground soaked in blood, and that the dead were all around him.

Getting on his knees with painful difficulty, he dragged himself along, till suddenly one leg fell over the edge of the shaft and the earth began to crumble beneath him. Throwing his weight forward by an almost superhuman effort, he succeeded in grasping a thick, gnarled vine which was firmly wedged, and pulled himself away from the shaft.

From his general knowledge of the Wilderness, he believed he had fallen into one of the mines, and was probably resting on some outcropping ledge from which the slightest movement would precipitate him to fatal depths. In the agony of his uncertainty, his imagination excited by excruciating pain, he lay still in a trance of apprehension. The foliage was so thick that not a ray of light penetrated to dispel his illusion. His heart felt the awful lethargy attending loss of blood, while each new, horrid fancy sent a sickening thrill of warm life coursing through his veins only to be succeeded by a chilling sweat. He closed his eyes, and thought he saw light printed against his lids. He opened them, and the darkness touched them like the blankness of death. Finally, like some wounded animal pursued to its last cover, he ceased to think, almost to feel.

While in this condition, he heard a rustle near him, then a crooning twitter, and then the comforting, first clear note of a bird. His whole being expanded with thanksgiving. If not above ground, he was at least near the surface.

And now, very gradually, the darkness was invaded. In a few minutes more he perceived the outline of leaves only a few feet distant, then the curious interior of the nest into which he must have crawled in his misery, and the close proximity of the shaft.

The silence, unbroken except by the sough of the wind and the song of birds, convinced him that the army must have moved from his neighbourhood, and that, although above ground, he was likely to die of weakness or hunger, as many another soldier in his wounded and solitary condition had done.

The light increased. His leafy retreat seemed full of song-birds, for there was a near jubilance and volume of singing almost confusing. A delicious, luxurious perfume saturated the warm, damp air : the grapevine was in the prime of its bloom. By and by a ray of sunlight shone through a rift in the leafy canopy, and touched his face. Cheered, revived, his moral force asserted itself ; and he became once more a soldier of the Army of the Potomac.

With the practical knowledge acquired in the army, the young captain began to examine the extent of his injuries, and, although weak from loss of blood, found that he could stand, and even walk a few steps.

By means of his right hand and by the self-infliction of much suffering, he made a rough bandage for his broken arm, and had again risen to his feet to try to push his way out of the enclosure, when a noise in the shaft led him by an impulsive and natural curiosity to peer over the edge.

The light was now sufficient to permit him to see a rough but strong ladder extending from the mouth to a landing several feet below. Standing on the landing and, doubtless, prevented by the sound above from making an incautious sortie, was a gigantic man, as black as a genuine Guinea negro.

The captain was about to withdraw, when his subterranean neighbour looked up.

“ Halloo, down there ! Where do you hail from ? ”

The negro scrutinised his interlocutor before replying, but presently, as if thoroughly reassured, began to

mount rapidly and with a facility evidently born of frequent ascents.

When he had reached the level, he towered several inches above the captain, and might have been dreaded on general principles if it had not been for the expression of blended courage and good-nature illuminating his features.

"I 'clar, marse, I were s'prised 'nuff to see yo' a-peerin' down. I t'ought de Wilderness putty well emptied out hyahabouts. I'se ben out'n in two er t'ree times sense de fight'n' stop las' night, a-holpin' pick up de wounded an' buryin' de dead. Dese all a-movin' on now. How'd yo' find out dis hyah? Ain't no white fut planted hitse'f behind dese vines ever befo'. Did yeh jes' come?"

"I don't know how long I have been here. The last thing I remember was scaling the breastworks under Carroll. I must have been wounded." He pointed to his arm.

"Lor' bress my soul! I ain't notice befo'. I wuz so s'prised to see yo'. Well, yo's wid a frien'. I'se Union, too. Ain't no Johnny reb 'bout me, ain't!" He glanced towards the shaft and back to Captain Haldane, and was evidently about to make some proposition, when the wounded soldier, turning very white, fainted.

The negro hastily drew the young man under a screen of vines, crawled from the covert, and in a few minutes returned. The captain was still unconscious.

Without delay, and as if apprehensive of discovery, he picked up the slight figure, braced it against his body with his left arm, and made a skilful descent of the ladder. On reaching the landing, a mere ledge overhanging a pit lost in the darkness, he caught hold of a series of iron rings riveted in the rock, and, walking thus for a few rods, turned an angle, and came into a high, dry passage with a gradually sloping floor, but

firm and smooth underfoot. Far down the passage, like the glimmer at the end of a long tunnel, shone a circle of light, which grew larger and brighter as he advanced. As he approached the light, there was a sound of voices. But, as he came near enough to distinguish words, he turned into another passage at right angles; and now the slope was upward. There were cracks in the rocky vault, and through them glimmered the daylight.

Although the negro was a portion of the time in absolute darkness and always in obscurity, he moved with great firmness and rapidity. Finally, after a third turn, which brought him into a natural cave with a high arched roof, he felt for the latch of a door set in a small opening, and entered a long recess lighted by a couple of tallow candles and furnished in a rough but comfortable fashion. The floor was thickly padded with fresh hay. A trundle-bed with clean bedding was at the farther end. A chair or two, a table, a stack of guns, some boxes corded and labelled, completed the belongings of the place, which bore the appearance of a fortress.

The negro laid his burden on the bed, and forced a little brandy between the pallid lips under the yellow fringe of a mustache. The half-closed eyes showed an edge of vacant colour. While he was thus engaged, the rough door was pushed softly open, and a woman of imposing stature and noble composure of manner entered. He turned, smiled, but, without vouchsafing explanations, continued his effort.

"What yo' done gone an' done, Moses, bringin' a white man down hyah! No white man ain't goin' to keep de secret of dis hyah place! An' why didn't yo' come fer me? Yo' ain't no nuss. Lemme come."

She knelt down by the bed, stroked the soldier's hair back with a caressing sweep of the hand, uncovering a

streak of girlish fairness, loosened his coat and collar, dexterously pulled off his boots, and, pointing to the injured arm, proceeded with great tenderness and skill to cut off the heavy army coat and relieve the wounded member.

The effect was almost immediate. The captain breathed a long, convulsive sigh, his lids trembled, and, with the wide-open stare of returning consciousness, he gazed into the face bent over him.

"I'm Judith,—his wife." And she waved her hand with a gesture of dignity and natural grace towards Moses. "Yo' ain't got no cause to worry wid us. You'se safe. I'll git yo' well, I will."

The words were simple; but the melody of the musical, guttural voice, the lingering, drawling tones, and a racial look of motherhood with its subtle alliance to some immanence in nature, some spontaneity of sex, filled the captain with that peculiar confidence, the recompense of a sick man or an unfortunate one, when, in helplessness of body or prostration of courage, he finds himself, for the time being, dependent on the ministrations of a woman.

Moses tiptoed around in the hay, waiting on his wife, who, with knowledge born of the emergencies of the war, examined the soldier's broken bones, found the fractures simple, the wounds in a still healthy condition, and proceeded to exercise her surgical skill with beneficial results.

When Haldane's varied needs were attended to, and he had fallen into a profound sleep, Judith stood watching him for a few minutes with the brooding serenity of a nurse sure of her vocation and delighting in its exercise. Evidently, the results of her care were satisfactory; for she presently left her patient, and, proceeding in the direction of the voices that Moses had avoided, entered an abandoned excavation of vast pro-

portions and dimly lighted by clusters of "Confederate candles," which were made of wicks coated with wax and resin, coiled on frames, and the lighted end drawn through a piece of perforated tin.

This sombre interior was filled with negroes of every description. Men clad in the uniform of both armies; women in the prime of life; children; infants; young men and women; grisly-haired, rheumatic beings, whose sex was difficult to discriminate, so motley was their garb; ancient crones with toothless gums and wrinkled skins; living mummies in weird harmony with their surroundings,—composed this band of refugees from the armies and plantations of Virginia.

The furnishing of their subterranean living-room displayed a bizarre litter of homely and elegant things, many of which had been appropriated from "marse's," others stolen, while others again were the flotsam and jetsam from the loot of war.

The soldiers had originally become a part of this underground family in the same manner as Captain Haldane; but, with the gregarious instincts of their race and the vagrant impulses of newly acquired liberty, they did not rejoin the army after recovery. The life satisfied their social propensities, and afforded them, in common with their companions, opportunity for plunder.

The little community exhibited a ludicrous and pathetic blending of morality and immorality, the result of bondage, of their present condition as outcasts, and of the fundamental, instinctive assumption of all races, when they begin to ascend, that the world owes them a living, and they are bound to get it. The birth of any people, according to the law of a civilised and peaceful nation, is rooted in immorality. Theft, lying, self-defence at all hazards, are the conditions of its elementary existence.

Over this strange conglomeration of hidden humanity,

## The Grapes of Wrath

Moses and Judith had, by virtue of native dignity and authority, constituted themselves leaders. The effect of Judith's presence was immediately noticeable as she advanced into the midst of them.

The pickaninnies suspended their squabbling, the old women looked up to her with childlike veneration and confidence, the young women repeated the refrain on every lip whenever any of their number appeared from without,— "Any news? any news?"

Judith stood still, waiting for the hubbub of questions to cease.

In that dim light and in surroundings so strange, and towering over a squatting, reclining, generally recumbent company of blacks whose shadows, scarcely darker than themselves, assumed all sorts of fantastic, grotesque shapes, she appeared like some queen of Hades. She was a quadroon; and her satiny skin, of a rich coffee colour, showed a carmine tint in her cheeks which was further heightened by the deep red of her lips. Her black, silky, wavy hair was parted in two huge puffs standing out above either ear, from which hung large gold hoops. Her eyes were full, and with a velvety darkness in striking contrast with the stern yet benignant expression of her countenance and the commanding yet elastic carriage of her tall, rotund figure. She was a woman of such unusual and imposing beauty, and withal with that subtle, pathetic blending of assurance and humility suggestive in the Southern bond-woman of relations nameless and inevitably tragic to her affections and final destiny that, to a white onlooker, she might have typified an Esther whom the king had failed to honour or a Vashti who had established a court of her own.

When the silence was complete, she spoke. "Bro' Moses, he come back a leetle while ago. De armies all done gone f'm hyahabouts. De squ'r'l's an' birds is

hoppin' over de battlefiel' des like es if not'in' happen up dar. Bro' Moses found a few what wusn't toted wid de oder sick ones, an he's tol' em 'bout de camp furder back in de Wilderness. Dose what cyant git dere dem-selves, we'se all goin' to help when night comes. An dere'll be dead uns what wuz overlooked to bury,—eber so many,— lots of work fer all to-night. An' he foun' a young white cap'n jes by de shaft, what dunno how he got dar. An' de cap'n's in de trun'le-bed ; an' I've set his bones, an' he's doin' well an's fast asleep. No-buddy mus' go nigh dat spot whar he lies till I say so. Chloe, you an' Stella an' youse mammies mus' git de dinner to-day ; an' it's time you wuz 'bout it."

Chloe and her companions, in obedience to orders, stole forth into the mysterious ramification of passages, while a rustle of excitement and anticipation of the evening began to stir those who remained.

## V.

A WEEK after their arrival in Washington, the young Virginians, under the escort of their uncle, set out for New Jersey ; and, at the close of a fine May day, Mrs. Rufus Manners and little John sat on the porch at Mulholland, awaiting them.

The trees on the lawn and sidewalk were full of singing and chirping robins. A colony of thrushes, intoning an antiphonal even-song, cleft the air with the poignant, melodious, pulsating warble the final upward note of which, like a question torn from the inner heart, was responded to in a falling cadence, like the divine soothing of an over-eager spirit.

"Oh Patty, listen ! The birds are singing like that in our own trees at home. It makes me feel so homesick ! "

At this moment John saw his cousins. He ran down the steps, as Virginia alighted from the carriage, and, throwing his arms around her neck, smothered her with kisses. Patty found herself in the tender embrace of her aunt, and they all went into the house together.

The cheerful interior, the affectionate greeting of Mrs. Manners' two maids, who in the memory of the young women were as stable a part of the domicile as the furniture, and the care and love evident in every detail of their welcome, restored their spirits and volubility.

A pleasant commotion stirred the usually quiet house. Virginia was full of orders, and Betsy attended to more commands in ten minutes than she was accustomed to receive in a day. Patty, however, waited on herself ; and there seemed to be a self-effacement in her way of doing things, puzzling to Virginia, who stopped in her preparations for supper two or three times to fix a curious stare upon her younger sister.

When they went downstairs, their grandfather stood

waiting for them in the parlour doorway. His rustic, loose-fitting garments thrust themselves upon the alert, inclusive attention of the Southerners; but there was a dominating dignity in the old man, and at this moment it was imbued with a tenderness which touched the impressionable girls to the quick. They hung around his neck, and the clasp of their young arms above his bent shoulders was a pretty sight.

Betsy announced supper; and Mrs. Manners led the way through the wide hall with her brother, little John walking between them, while old Mr. Manners followed with an arm about each of his grand-daughters.

There was a long garden at the rear of the house. The dining-room windows were wide open. The clear, golden twilight lingered over the grass-bordered paths and fruit-trees in flower. Beds of tulips burned crimson circles into the earth, while long rows of pease shone green against the vacant spaces of rich, newly prepared loam.

The table was set in the middle of the high-ceiled, square room; and its order and elegance were beautiful after their fashion. The lamps on the mantel were already lighted, and cast a glow down upon the linen, silver, and china. The interior scene seemed to vie with the picture outside, gradually melting into deeper shade.

The table presented the stereotyped abundance and variety of the country supper of the sixties, and in the few seconds before grace was said it stamped itself upon Patty's memory.

There was a full silver service in front of her aunt, who was haloed in a kind of white loveliness,—white gown, snowy hair, white hands. At the other end of the table sat her uncle Jared, portly, with a satin stock and a gold watch-chain looped from his buttonhole to his waistcoat pocket. His black hair, parted at the side, rose in a curly mass above his forehead; and to

Patty, on this particular night, his square, dark face, with its heavy, straight brows and powerful lines, seemed to embody some new, stern, aggressive Northern power and supremacy not hitherto existent to her imagination. Little John sat opposite her, with his shrewd yet dreamy eyes fixed upon her face, as if riddling any secret it might contain, and with a patent growing friendliness and admiration.

As Patty saw the plates of tea biscuit, the bountiful platter of cold meat in front of her uncle, the relays of pickles and cheese, the two cut-glass dishes of "preserves," and the cake-baskets piled with nutcakes, pound cake, fruit cake, and jelly cake, the memory of the starving South rose hot within her. The long journey, the change of air, had roused the eagerness of her youthful hunger, but its insistency shamed her; and, at this moment of keen appreciation, she imposed upon her appetite the duty of habitual and excessive abstemiousness in memory and honor of those Virginians who were starving for The Cause.

Some maternal instinct, never quite satisfied by her two boys, some feminine longing for larger opportunity of motherly petting, stirred in Mrs. Manners' breast as she looked at Patty. The young girl sat erect, her slender figure never touching the chair-back during the rather long meal. She was very fair, blue veins showing on her temples, and pink spots, like rose-leaves, dyeing the perfect whiteness of her cheeks. Her eyes were large, still and stern,—beautifully shaped blue eyes, through which played subtle fires of sentiment and passion. Her hair, and delicate brows, a shade lighter in hue, were a rich, nutty brown with red tints, enhancing and warming the calm loveliness of features, the regularity of which was softened by an expression of sensitive refinement. Young as she was, Patty looked the fine lady through and through, as did her Aunt Cornelius;

and this essential something, native to each, developed a relation between them, exquisite, tenacious, and tender.

"Patty, you are not eating enough. Let me give you another helping of this roast beef," said Mr. Manners, looking at her with mild keenness.

But Patty refused, nibbling, however, more or less continuously, at a biscuit, and making it last through Virginia's hearty supper.

"Ah, uncle," said Virginia, with a soft, rich, lazy laugh, as she buttered her fourth biscuit, "you don't know Patty. When she puts her foot down, that is the end of the matter. What she has been living on the past week, I am sure I don't know! Aunt Cornelius, I am so hungry, I'm rapacious! I will take another cup of tea, if you please."

Betsy handed the big, old-fashioned, flaring teacup to her mistress, while Mr. Jared Manners, with a look of approval, placed a piece of beef on Virginia's plate.

She leaned back in her chair with indolent grace while these attentions were in progress. A glint of amusement and defiance sparkled in her eyes as she glanced at Patty and continued her supper. She surmised Patty's scruples. "Aunt Cornelius," she said presently, "is there any society in Mulholland, or have all the young men gone to the war? Who is the belle here? I intend to cut her out, sho' as I live." A smile of anticipation spread over her full red lips, and deepened the dimples in her cheeks.

"We are neither marrying nor giving in marriage these days, Virginia," said her grandfather, soberly, "The men who are not in the war are taking care of those the soldiers left behind them."

The young girl rolled a sleepy, indulgent glance towards the old man.

"There are a few young people left, father; and they will do their best, I am sure, to make it pleasant for our

girls. Do you remember Thomas Robotham, Virginia?" said her aunt.

"The one we used to call 'little Tommy Needles'? Yes, indeed, I remember him very well. Is his nose as long and sharp as ever? and does he carry a pocket full of sugar still? Tommy was always and forever sucking sweets."

Mr. Jared Manners laughed heartily and noisily. "That describes Tommy pretty well still,—hey, Cornelia? However, Virginia, Mr. Thomas Robotham is the beau of beaux in Mulholland, now that George Bond and Silas Dayton are at the front. Thomas has hung his shingle out, too, and is, as the shingle asserts, an 'attorney-at-law.' He leads the choir, also. Some people make fun of him because he was drafted and bought a substitute, but every man to his own way of thinking, I say, when it is a question of living. Here, Patty, try a piece of this fruit cake. I haven't eaten any so rich in a year. No? But you must, child."

"Excuse me, uncle," said Patty, firmly, but gently.

"I couldn't refuse you anything, uncle," replied Virginia, with a sweet smile and a look provocative of gallantry. "I am sure I shall have bad dreams to-night, though."

"I'll take the risk of the dreams, my dear. And there is little Steevens. I suppose you remember Timothy Steevens?"

"Is he still here?" Virginia brightened.

"Yes, and it almost broke his heart because they wouldn't accept him when the first volunteers were mustered in. He is the smallest and the pluckiest man in Mulholland."

"Everybody loves Timothy," said Mrs. Manners. "There is something about him! Even the dogs follow him."

"Well," said old Mr. Manners, "the reason is, he is so

responsible. He is always supporting some one. When he couldn't get into the army, he said he would pay for a substitute, at any rate. He meant to fight in one way, if he didn't in another. He was as good as his word. It took half his salary to do it. My boys are all big men, six foot in their stockings, and I'm glad of it," he continued in a voice trembling with pride; "but, I declare, I would be proud to own Timothy, stunted and runty as he is."

"I have been waiting to have you tell me about young Haldane," said Virginia. "He was a Senior in Princeton the last time I was on; and, although he treated me like a little girl when I was fourteen, I couldn't help liking him. I reckon he is a mighty handsome young man. Is he, Aunt Cornelia?"

"He is a great favourite in Mulholland."

Old Mr. Manners interrupted the conversation with a heavy sigh, half a groan.

"What is the matter, father?" cried Mrs. Manners, springing from her chair.

"Why, ain't you heard the news?" he cried, relapsing into the country dialect, in his astonishment. "The widow Haldane received word to-day that her son was among the missing in the battle of the Wilderness. He led his company into the charge under Carroll. The paper said that perhaps he was burned to death. He dashed right into a mess of blazing logs piled for breastworks against the rebels. Perhaps he was taken prisoner, but that's too good to hope for. At any rate, he's among the missing."

For the first time Virginia and Patty heard the Southern soldiers called rebels, and both girls trembled with excitement and indignation. Virginia swayed for a few seconds, visibly making an effort at control; and then, while her relatives were absorbed in the calamity that had befallen the widow and her son, she said in a

proud voice: "We Southerners are fighting for State rights, grandfather. We are not rebels. Our cause is a holy cause!"

"Stop, Virginia!" said Patty, under her breath. "Have regard for grandfather's years."

To the keen ears of old Mr. Manners the forbearance in her voice was both futile and exasperating. He rose slowly from his seat beside his daughter; and, facing the length of the table, while a tremor shook his massive frame and bent shoulders, he glanced from one girl to the other.

"I want you to understand just one thing!" He brought his closed fist down till the glass and china rattled. "There is but one holy cause, and that is the cause of the North! You may as well learn first as last, my girls, that our Northern men are fighting rebels; and, if you have a father who is on the rebel side, I have a son—and, also, a son and grandson—on the Union side. I am trying to make the best of your father's fighting against his country, but I'd give my very life to have it otherwise. We don't want to hurt your feelings, and we are all going to try our best not to; but, at the same time, the truth's the truth, and, when we have occasion to speak of the war before you, we don't intend to mince matters." He sank into his chair, overcome with a tide of feeling, fused of patriotism, bitterness concerning his son Gordon, and tenderness for all concerned.

Virginia stood clenching the back of her chair with both hands. Her eyes looked like molten jet. Her lips were parted. For a moment she glanced from one to another, then, commanding herself, turned and swept out of the room.

Patty sat still and white. Respect for her grandfather was imprinted on her features, although her expression breathed negation. When he sat down, she

continued to gaze at him so intently that, apparently, she was unconscious when Virginia left the room. But suddenly her words came.

"Grandfather," she said, and rose as she spoke, "we are obliged to respect your years. We can never reply to you; but we can think our own thoughts, we can hold our own views. We can never reply to Uncle Jared or Aunt Cornelia, either. But you must all understand, however silent we may be hereafter, that, however long Virginia and I are in the North, we shall remain Southerners. To us the Southerners will ever be loyal men and their cause a holy cause."

It would be impossible to convey the dramatic intensity with which Patty finished her remarks. Her eyes blazed. Each feature had sharpened, and her delicate frame vibrated with passion.

Her grandfather regarded her with a certain grim satisfaction. His anger and austerity had spent themselves. He enjoyed her spirit, her audacity. She had spoken to him with his own fearlessness; and secretly he rejoiced in her, as his very own blood in deeper senses than that of the flesh.

Mr. Jared Manners had tipped back the heavy mahogany chair in which he was sitting; and he looked at Patty with some wonder, but more severity. He understood Virginia better. He could put up with temper, any amount of it, in a woman. He had a hot temper himself. But for this fragile thing to sit so still and get so white, and talk like that — ugh!

"Patty, my dear."

Patty looked towards her aunt with gathering emotion.

"Come here!" Mrs. Manners held out her arms.

Patty drew herself up, straightened far back, trembling, her glance askance.

But there were only tenderness, entreaty, and love in that matronly, beautiful countenance. With a stifled

scream, her shoulders sinking, Patty rushed to her aunt, sprang into her arms, and buried her face in Mrs. Manners' neck.

"Oh, auntie, auntie," she sobbed, "send me home! I can't stand it!"

Old Mr. Manners fumbled with a big silk handkerchief, and wiped his eyes. Mr. Jared Manners liked Patty, after all.

"We must stay together, darling, and put up with one another," said Mrs. Manners, laughing a little, but caressingly, "and love one another more. And, Patty dear," her voice breaking slightly, "my husband and son, and little John's father and brother, are in the war, too. We are all carrying heartaches these days, your grandfather more than any of us. I don't see how he stands it so well." Mrs. Manners hid her lips against Patty's ear. "Go tell grandpa you love him, and put your arms around him."

Patty choked back a sob, drew away a second, and then, with a sweet docility proud and tender at once, went to Mr. Manners, and, kneeling beside the old man, laid her head against him, and, lifting up his hardened, sunburned hand, reverently kissed it.

Mr. Jared Manners pushed his chair back with a great noise, and, straightening his lips to hide his feelings, walked out of the room.

Patty's grandfather kissed her, moistening her upturned face with the agonising tears that come so slow and hurt so deeply after threescore and ten.

## VI.

**V**IRGINIA went out one morning soon after her arrival to hunt up a former friend, Mary Livingston. The Livingston family puzzled Virginia; for, although Mary's brother Will was at Princeton, Frank was a clerk in a hardware store. The family lived in a small frame house, and kept one servant,—“girl” in the mid-century vernacular of Mulholland. But they were on the list in every social affair; and Mulholland, with its two thousand inhabitants, had traditions, and “mansions,” and “distinguished citizens.” Virginia's wonder was profound. The delicate social gradations in a country village excited her humorous contempt, and all those minor reasons given for the elevation of one person and the loss of caste by another frequently evaded her comprehension. She accepted Mrs. Rufus Manners' blue book on faith; but, with her Southern notions, it is safe to say that, if she had lived in Mulholland a lifetime, the local point of view would never have become hers. To her the station in which a person was born fixed his position irremediably. To one in an inferior position she could grant admiration and respect, with condescending qualifications. That interesting flux and reflux of the human tide, the coming uppermost of the lower deeps, the earth-worn surf of stranded waves,—all this, to Virginia, was a spectacle for observation merely. A muddy, refuse-burdened, top wave was to her still a top wave; and that was the end of it.

As for Mary, what a vivid memory she had remained! and what a glow, half motherly and longing, the talk of Mary the night before had brought into Mrs. Rufus Manners' face!

During the week her nieces had spent in Washington their aunt Anne had made some additions to their ward-

robe. Virginia, therefore, looked fashionable on the warm May morning when she sauntered forth.

There were no sidewalks, strictly speaking, in Mulholland. But there were shady, foot-worn paths, upon which the grass encroached more or less, leading under the trees on either side of the streets; and Virginia was a noticeable figure in her black silk mantilla, her black lace mitts, and white frock.

When she came to the little white house with its green blinds, its front stoop, on one side of which, over the arched trellis hooding it, a honeysuckle grew, and over the other a rose, she lingered, a reminiscent contrast taking her back to her own spacious home.

The small yard, enclosed by a picket fence and framed between the red street and the white house, was broken up into diminutive flower-bordered grass plots on either side of a narrow walk leading to the front door, while tributary paths meandered around the sides of the cottage. The flowers were in full bloom; and the air was heavy with the scent of roses, among which buzzed a swarm of bumble-bees.

Virginia doubled her beautiful fist, and knocked on the white door. There was a little delay, and then Mary herself opened it. The girls rushed into each other's arms.

Mary led the way into the darkened parlour, still cool, and, seating Virginia, excused herself. When she returned soon after, the long white apron she had worn had been removed. Virginia admired the delicate, erect figure in its blue and white gingham, with the round low neck.

Mary smiled as she came in, and said, "The bread is nearly ready to knead; and, as we are without a girl just now, I went to ask mother to do it in my stead."

"Good gracious, Mary, you don't mean to say you can make bread!" exclaimed Virginia, in naive surprise. "I never heard of such a thing."

"I always make the bread when we are without help, which is very often the case with nearly every one in Mulholland since the mills were built. But I am not going to spoil our visit by talking of housekeeping affairs."

Virginia shook her head, a smiling amusement still possessing her features as she exclaimed contemplatively, "My mother can't even mix a batter-cake."

Mary glanced unconsciously at her own hands, long, fine-skinned ones, with delicately moulded finger-tips, now stained with the strawberries she had been preserving earlier in the morning. "Why, I believe I can do everything that pertains to such simple housekeeping as ours," she said.

"Well," said Virginia, serenely, "there is never much occasion for such knowledge among the ladies of the So'th. Our time is occupied with our social duties, our amusements and accomplishments. You have a new piano since I was no'th before, and a grand one, too, at that. It almost fills the room. What did you get such a big one for?"

"The boys gave it to me," Mary replied, an affectionate light suffusing her face. "The boys are going to give mother and me a bigger house one of these days, and the piano will be all ready for it. It has a wonderful tone."

"I'd like to try it." And, lifting the cover, Virginia sat down and played a succession of marches and waltzes, rattling or sentimental. "Raise the windows," she said presently. "I am going to use the loud pedal, and I don't want to bring this low ceiling down or choke the music."

Mary raised the windows, an irrepressible smile hovering over her features; and Virginia, with her foot on the loud pedal, expended her muscular powers on "Wollenhaupt's March." When she had finished, turning on the stool, her black eyes sparkling with complacent gratifica-

tion over her own effort, she said graciously "Now let me hear what you can do, Mary."

There was a still, tender light in Mary's eyes as she began to finger the keys in a tentative manner, as if asking them what they had to say. Ever since the railway had built a branch to Mulholland, two years before, her brothers had sent her to New York for musical instruction; and she played snatches now from nocturnes and sonatas and symphonies with something crisp and finished in her accentuation and interpretation. Virginia regarded her with surprise and some admiration. Virginia was spontaneous. She was generous, and her perceptions were keen.

"There is something superior, Mary, in the way you sit at that instrument and bring out its tone. I believe you know enough to teach music,—I declare I do."

"Oh," and Mary laughed comfortably and meditatively, "the boys would never let me teach. They would feel ashamed if I did anything to earn my living."

"I didn't mean you would,—of co'se not. How are your brothers? Why didn't one of them go to the war?"

"Will wanted to go dreadfully. He ran away twice. He got as far as Trenton once, and was sent home, and as far as Washington the second time, only to be sent back. He cried like a baby. As for Frank, he felt he had mother and me to think of. It was a great sacrifice for him to give up going."

"I'm glad they wanted to go, at all events," replied Virginia, judicially. "A military man is my beau-ideal. Patty and I are called the belles of the army of the Rapidan. Who is the belle in Mulholland,—who is?" And Virginia lifted Mary's chin in her hand, peering lovingly into her eyes. "You? If it is you, I won't cut you out; but, if it is anybody else— Mary, I

haven't seen a young man to speak to since I came.  
But who is the belle?"

"I suppose you would say Catherine Schuyler is, only belle isn't the word we use here. All the fellows like Catherine. They all want to dance with her. They are all in love with her or think they are, if that is what you mean."

"That is exactly what I mean. But I don't remember her. Oh, yes, I do, too! She lives in the brick house with the iron fence. She was a white-haired little thing when I saw her last, a wordless kind of a girl who stared."

Mary leaned her cheek on her hand, and laughed and laughed again. "When you see Catherine, you will appreciate your remarks. She is the most beautiful being I ever saw!" said Mary, dispassionately.

Virginia looked thoughtful and genuinely anxious. "She is blond, of course!"

"Yes, what Will calls a 'sumptuous blonde.' Will is dead in love with her, and as mad as a March hare because he is two years younger and Catherine treats him like a boy."

"For my part, I never did admire a pink and white beauty," replied Virginia, rather inconsequently. "Mary, suppose you attend to the bread. I would like to watch you do it."

"Really?"

"I really would."

"Well, if it is not too late."

"Shall I come right along?" inquired Virginia, following after.

"Yes, do, if you don't mind the heat of the kitchen. There is a fine draft, though; and you can sit by the window."

Mrs. Livingston, who was about to perform Mary's task, gladly relinquished it. She was a small, white,

thin woman with a refined presence, and the highly strung repressed look of intense nervous energy. The immaculate neatness of her person was matched by the order and cleanliness of the big, sunny kitchen, forming a long L with the rest of the house. The windows on both sides were wide open. The wire-screened door leading into the back yard revealed a grass plot on which some towels and table linen were bleaching. The syringas emitted a mealy, sleepy perfume.

Mary washed her hands and rolled up her sleeves, and Virginia sank into a rush-bottomed chair by the table, her expression a blending of condescension, interest, and affection.

As Mary floured her bread-board, Virginia unconsciously pulled out her face powder, and made little dabs here and there on her cheeks and chin.

"You have got a right pretty arm, Mary." And Virginia scrutinised with critical approval the round contour of Mary's arms and wrists, as she rolled the dough towards her over and over and thrust it with her fists. "How do you know when you are through?"

"Oh, by the feeling and the general floury look of a loaf. There, this is ready. Mother, dear, have you buttered the pans?"

"Yes, they are just behind you, under the bread-cloth. I can't bear the thought of a single fly traipsing on my food," added Mrs. Livingston, whisking a stray delinquent out of existence.

"Oh, Mrs. Livingston,"—and Virginia's mellow, rollicking laugh rang out,—"you ought to see the flies in our kitchen quarters. The flies and the niggers together are a sight out there in August. I don't mind the flies. They're part of the summer. I never saw a kitchen like this before in all my born days. I suppose Aunt Cornelia's is like it, but for some reason or other I have never wandered into Maria's domain. I didn't mo'n half

believe Mary when she said she could make bread. Who is that?" And she preened herself on hearing a rapid, ringing step without.

A tall young man swung open the door. He paused on seeing Virginia, but the next moment advanced with a cordial welcome, taking the young Southerner's extended hand in a hearty grasp, and excusing his abrupt entrance by saying, "Mother's boys always come around to the kitchen door when Mary has occasion to knead the bread."

"She is a princess in disguise," replied Virginia, with an air of a mistaken vocation on Mary's part.

"A darling 'Jersey Blue' doing the duty next to hand," replied Frank, with a spirited sparkle in an otherwise amiable and gentle eye. "When did you arrive, Miss Manners? and did your sister come with you?"

"We both arrived exactly three days ago, and you are the first young man I have met."

"A fearful responsibility for me! I shall retreat at once." And Frank laughingly withdrew. He came back with a general precise orderliness in his appearance, and Virginia told him he rivalled the kitchen.

Frank regarded her silently with the same sparkle in his eye. But she did not qualify or modify her comparison, and he forgot what she said in what she was looking. He could think of nothing but a royal crimson poppy, as he saw her velvety eyes and splendid flush and felt refreshed by something invigorating and leisurely in her appearance. He suppressed a sigh as he glanced at Mary in her gingham, his gaze resting with brotherly fondness on her exquisite neck rising like a chalice to hold the flower of her head, with its light golden-brown hair gathered to a knot above her close-set ears.

"Catherine Schuyler stopped me on the street this morning, Mary, to ask me to bring you over there tonight. She is going to invite about twenty informally.

We are to dance the Virginia reel, sing war-songs, and eat strawberries and cream."

Virginia looked wistful.

"I wish you were going to be there, Virginia," said Mary.

"I dare say you will hear from Miss Schuyler in the course of the day if you would care to," said Frank. "I'll call, and tell her you are here."

"Thank you," replied Virginia, "but I am afraid of the war-songs."

"Oh, you needn't sing, if you don't want to; and, if you should, you can make mental reservations or keep still when the sentiment doesn't suit you. There is an excellent feeling of comradeship, I understand, between the greys and blues, except when a battle is on."

"Well," replied Virginia, reflectively, "it will do no harm for Miss Schuyler to invite Patty and me. But I must be going. Aunt Cornelia will wonder where I am."

"I'll walk around with you," said Frank, seizing his hat with some eagerness. "I just slipped home to tell Mary, so that she could plan her day accordingly."

Virginia was the kind of girl whose whole being glowed in the presence of a possible lover, and for the first time since she had left Washington she felt alive. She was like the spring, a beautiful thing of manifold suggestiveness. Her walk had an airy swing, impossible of imitation, dangerously near, yet utterly unlike the free, unrestrained gait of the buxom country girl. The pride in her bearing bordered on arrogance; but it was tempered by a smiling conciliatoriness, as her vanity demanded incessant tribute, and the habit and training of her life led her to seek to please her equals. She was clothed in agreeableness as she walked under the maples with Frank; and, like a fish to the bait, he rose to her enticement. To her he was not alone Frank Livingston; he was the universal man.

Visitors were not of frequent occurrence in Mulholland, and Frank felt elated in walking with the beautiful Southerner.

"I suppose Miss Schuyler's party will begin at twilight and break up at nine o'clock," remarked Virginia, nonchalantly.

"Why do you say that?" inquired Frank.

"Because all you Mulhollanders seem to be in trade, and of co'se you have to go to bed early and rise with the lark. It is not what I am accustomed to, you know." And Virginia raised her eyebrows, sighed, and smiled at Frank like one who cherishes a grievance.

"It is true that I am in a hardware store at present,"—and Frank smiled back,—"but my ultimate destination is your Uncle Rufus' bank. You wouldn't call that being in trade, would you?"

"Why not?" inquired Virginia. "And won't you have to get up just as early and breakfast at seven, when you are in the bank? I don't see why more Northerners do not live on their land, as we do. That is the only way to live. Look at all of these houses set in a patch of ground and surrounded by a fence, pinned down, one might say, and tied in, as if they might run away. It gives me a feeling of suffocation."

Frank flushed, looked dangerously meditative, but concluded to laugh. "I think Mulholland ways and people will grow on you if you stay long enough. But, if you shouldn't like us, you have your grandfather's place to retreat to. I should say that was the size of a Southern plantation."

"Oh, yes," replied Virginia, indifferently; and then, as if recollecting herself, she began to praise Mary.

"She is a beauty,—Mary is. I always did like a clear, dark skin and large grey eyes. When the war is over, you must let Mary come so'th; and we will introduce her to our society."

Frank regarded her with quizzical indulgence.

"I know a So'thern man," she continued, "that I reckon is just the one to marry Mary. Although he is poor, he belongs to one of our first families; and Mary is so unworldly, she wouldn't mind poverty."

"You must not feel so sure of Mary. Her brothers can look out for her. If we had our way, she would never marry. We ask for no better luck than to take care of her forever."

"That is all very well now, Mr. Livingston. But there isn't a man who has a heart big enough for more than one woman at a time. That is a part of their delightfulness and provokingness. When you and your brother are married, where will Mary be? You must certainly let her come so'th, and I will see what I can do for her there. I always was right fond of your sister Mary. Why, here we are at Aunt Cornelius's! Won't you come in?"—as he opened the gate and held it for her to pass—"No?" She turned towards him; and the sun, now high above them, flecked her hair and her rich, glowing face.

Frank lingered, loath to put her luscious beauty behind him. He felt the natural, innocent, instinctive yearning of his sex towards hers,—a kind of nature worship for which a man is no more responsible than a woman is when her heart springs forth towards a winsome child.

"I hope you and Miss Patty will conclude to shine upon us to-night," he said gallantly, stepping backward.

"I think there will be no doubt about me, but Patty's scruples rise up at unexpected moments. I try not to air mine unless they will do some good. I am dying for a dance; and I am sure Patty is, if she would tell the truth about her feelings. You will find her awfully grown up when you see her. The war has aged us both," concluded Virginia, half humorously, half soberly. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye," nodded Frank, as he pulled himself together and began to walk away.

"Give my love to Miss Schuyler!" cried Virginia, with a final merry smile; and, picking up her frock with either hand, she held it daintily while ascending the high steps of the piazza.

## VII.

THE power to assimilate is not always marked by years. Patty was more open to the many possible phases of political opinion current in the North than her older sister. Virginia had received her stamp for all time. Patty was still in process of formation, and sympathetic, in consequence, to habits, prejudices, and customs foreign to those in which she had been reared. She possessed the quick intuition for both sides of a question; and this led her to see very early how profoundly her Northern relatives were suffering, and that loyalty, whatever its expression, is a tremendously vital principle, to be treated with reverence. The idea of the Union, moreover, fascinated her with its largeness. Virginia cherished the feudal idea; and a union of states, free to dissolve under the slightest provocation, and each accounting its local institutions and customs as of supreme importance, charmed her romantic temperament. Neither girl reasoned concerning slavery. It was too near them. They were too much a part of the system. They were too young and too ignorant for a general conception of slavery as related to nations, and the slaves on their father's plantation they considered as well treated as beings whom they had been bred to believe essentially inferior deserved to be. They had never reflected on those Northern axioms concerning the enslaved,—the sundering of domestic ties, labour without wage, the equality before God of all human beings, and the right of each to pursue happiness.

During her stay in the North, Virginia intended to have as good a time as possible and to defend The Cause aggressively.

After the reconciliation with her grandfather, Patty felt that the least she could do, while under the protec-

tion of relatives whose convictions were opposed to her own concerning the right of the South to secede, was to avoid discussion and render herself as agreeable as circumstances would permit. It was not an easy part for so young a girl to undertake, and implied self-consciousness. But where is the Southerner who does not take himself seriously? and where would the great deeds of the world be if individuals did not magnify and exalt their own place and influence.

Virginia was belligerently loyal, and in the little circle of Mulholland was the Southern word incarnate. Patty, in her very presence, was the Southern idea of the young gentlewoman.

To Virginia's surprise, Patty accepted Catherine Schuyler's invitation, which seemed to arrive on the heels, so to speak, of Frank's departure; for an hour later Catherine herself called.

It was late twilight when the sisters, accompanied by Betsy, less as protector than guide, walked the short distance to the Schuyler mansion. Their thin slippers, with ribbon lacings high above their white stockings, hardly touched the earth as they hastened on. They looked like bunches of flowers moved by the wind, in their delicate organdies over huge crinoline skirts, swaying as they walked. Each girl, her hands covered with white silk mitts, carried a lace-bordered handkerchief and a small gilt-spangled, feather-tipped fan with sandal-wood sticks. Their bare arms and shoulders were protected by white gossamer-thread shawls; while lace fichus over their heads half concealed, half emphasised the roses which Mrs. Manners had pinned in their hair, braided in loops and brought forward around the ears, after a fashion of the day.

The long front of the red brick house where the Schuylers had lived for over a century was illuminated from top to bottom. The big windows, with white

facings, revealed between the thin curtains looped back the company scattered about the immense rooms on either side of the hall. A wistaria vine showed in the fading light, nearly covering one broad gable end ; and up from the garden, surrounded by a low brick wall and topped by an iron railing, came the scent of box and fragrant shrubs and roses.

A coloured woman opened the door, and the sisters exchanged mutely expressive glances. Something about the staid old place suggested home,— perhaps its utter lack of newness as much as anything else. Hair-cloth settees and chairs of prim design were ranged along the sides of the wide hall. A hat-rack, displaying a few caps, occupied a space near the front door ; and down the long flight of spiral stairs trooped a bevy of laughing girls, the light from a swinging lamp touching their uncovered shoulders with warm, glistening tints. There was a dignified bareness about the hall with its oil-cloth covered floor, the two or three portraits in tarnished gilt frames rather increasing the effect.

Patty's eyes were shining and moist with the thought of home as Catherine Schuyler hastened forward to greet them. Patty felt Catherine's quiet charm, and loved her from that moment. Virginia's arrested, expanded stare was a tribute.

Introductions and renewal of childhood friendships followed, and presently the party was in full movement.

When Mary Livingston sat down at the piano, it seemed impossible to sunder the group of which Virginia was the centre. Timothy Steevens and Thomas Robotham and Frank were like steel filings around a magnet. Virginia, in short, was holding a court, embracing the only three beaux the village could boast of. She was fanning vigorously, her soft, glowing eyes languishing first on one and then on another, her ready wit never failing. The young men, if like steel filings,

were also like boats tossed by a capricious sea. Thomas was the big, lumbering scow, lurching heavily under the commotion of Virginia's sallies, but looking serviceable for prosaic uses. He was no talker, but he was a smiler. No matter what Virginia said, Thomas smiled, the big dimples in his fat, pink cheeks in line with the creases of his chin folding upon his high stock and collar. And as for little Timothy Steevens, the only young man in Mulholland who wore a dress suit in the evening, he looked so good, so small, so too appreciative, so like a tame fowl waiting for a crumb, that it must have been the instinct of genius which led him to personate cock robin in a pantomime of *The Babes in the Wood*. The biggest things about Timothy were his voice, his nose, and his soul. These were on a colossal scale. A pretty sight in Mulholland was the "Academy" boys and girls loitering home from school, with Timothy, the principal, in the midst of them. He clasped in each hand the tiny hand of a child, sticky, begrimed, and affectionate. Other tenacious, jealous little fingers held on to his coat-tails ; and his progress was impeded by the forward children, now running on ahead and now walking backward, to fix adoring, rapturous eyes upon his sober, kindly, pedantic face. He was of their ilk in spirit, and they knew it. As the children gazed at Timothy, so Timothy regarded Virginia. And Frank, half magnetised, half resistant, was glad and sorry both when Catherine touched his arm, and led him towards the piano where several girls stood waiting to begin the singing.

Patty watched Catherine with that keen discrimination and youthful analysis which makes one girl such a clever and astute judge of another. Virginia beside Catherine was like a bank of cloudy sunset splendour against a clear, blue sky. Underneath her careless equanimity and nonchalance, Virginia was observant, also.

She noticed Catherine's French gown, of a style and material different from all the others,—simpler, more elegant; and chiefly she noticed that Catherine's own style was superior, not unlike Patty's, but less childishly self-conscious, as if its dignity and nobility were not in process of development.

What Patty noticed in Catherine was a large, sweet spirit in a large, beautiful body; for Catherine was very beautiful. Her long Dutch features were symmetrical and serious. A dimple cleft the oval of her chin, and other dimples played faintly in her cheeks when she spoke or smiled. There was a serene steadfastness in her gaze, difficult to describe. Her fine, straight yellow hair was so even and glossy that the braids had a sculpturesque smoothness, and it was so abundant that it made a thick natural roll on either side of her face. Patty thought of an heirloom her mother treasured,—a Bible with ivory covers set in gold.

Mary struck some preliminary chords. The key was a minor one.

Steevens's face responded. A slight shiver ran through Patty, and Virginia grew serious.

The girls held song-books open, and the Southerners perceived the selection was one that they could sing. Just then Catherine slipped a paper into Virginia's hand, containing various titles,—“The songs we are going to practise to-night,” she whispered. Virginia glanced them over, and thought the Northerners considerate; but she was watchful, and the watchfulness awoke her belligerency.

And now Mary's vibrant, melodious contralto chanted “Tenting to-night.” Little Steevens' diminutive chest swelled out, and in a deep bass, solemn and clear, he sang “Tenting to-night”; and then all the voices trembled in sympathetic unison with “Tenting on the old camp-ground.”

Before Patty's inner vision rose the desolation of the Wilderness and the encampment upon the Rapidan where General Lee and her father and scores of her friends had wintered, and whither she herself had ridden to say farewell only a short month before. Stepping back from the line of singers, she leaned her face against the wall and closed her eyes, a quiver creeping down her cheeks and hovering about her mouth. Catherine stole an arm around her. She suddenly straightened; and, rallying, her voice blended with Mary's.

And then they sang,—

“ We shall meet, but we shall miss him;  
There will be one vacant chair.”

Some one asked for “ Way down upon de Swanee Ribber,” and all again joined in. Thus for an hour they sang on, each with her own thoughts, each visualising an absent face or a fallen comrade or a lonely home.

A stillness fell upon the company, heightened by the low accompaniment Mary played in harmony with the sympathy the singing had evoked.

Suddenly Virginia broke in with: “ While we were in Washington, they were talking so much about a hymn that Mrs. Julia Ward Howe had written. Does anybody know it? I should like so much to hear it.”

Mary, unconsciously striking the key of the magnificent melody, gazed at Virginia in surprise. “ Do you mean the tune or the words, Virginia? I don't think you would like the words.”

“ Oh, I shall not mind. It is pure curiosity on my part. You sing it alone; and, whatever it is, I won't let myself get stirred up.”

The group about the piano had separated. Virginia lingered by the instrument, and, leaning against it, glanced at the circle around the room with smiling

defiance. There was something weather-breeding in the liquid fire of her black eyes.

Mary played the warlike, triumphant melody through ; and, drawing herself erect and looking towards the ceiling as if she meant to forget her surroundings, she sang with feeling :—

“ Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord ;  
 He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are  
 stored ;  
 He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword ;  
 His truth is marching on.”

Virginia’s smiling lips straightened.  
 And now Mary sang,—

“ I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnished rows of steel.”

When she reached the conclusion of the stanza, little Steevens forgot himself ; and he let the full volume of his deep bass roll out on —

“ Since God is marching on.”

Still Virginia stood there, unprotesting, but with the attitude of Bellona, as Steevens continued with Mary :—

“ He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat ;  
 He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment-seat ;  
 Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer him ! be jubilant, my feet !  
 Our God is marching on.”

Although Thomas Robotham had a prosaic person and an unimaginative, practical nature, he was patriotic. Virginia’s attitude conveyed to him no other meaning than that of attention ; and, since Steevens was singing, he might as well join, too. Thomas had a tenor voice, and it burst forth like the fanfare of a silver trumpet with —

"In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across the sea,  
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;  
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,  
While God is marching on."

Mary's fingers threaded the keys an instant, and then the last sound died away.

Patty sat erect and rigid, very white about the lips. Virginia was staring at her, her cheeks flaming. She turned to Catherine.

"Miss Schuyler," she said, a husky richness in her voice, "I must ask you to excuse Patty and me. We cannot stay in a house where young men forget themselves so far as to outrage our feelings. We are So'therners; and we can't sit still and listen to No'thern men sing about us as if we were sinners, and — and about setting our slaves free. Come, Patty!"

But Patty did not stir.

Catherine stood between the sisters, a look of fine restraint chiselling her features. "You forget, Miss Manners, that you asked Mary Livingston to sing 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic.'"

"I did ask her, of co'se! I didn't ask her to sing it as if she believed it! She couldn't believe such nonsense! But I didn't ask your other guests to sing, and I feel insulted. Come, Patty!"

Compunction sharpened little Steevens' nose. He bobbed forward, his hand extended deprecatingly, and faltered: "My patriotism ran away with me, Miss Manners. I felt so stirred up that I forgot your sentiments. I beg your pardon,— I beg your pardon, Miss Schuyler, for singing. I — I — I'm sure I'm much distressed. I assure you, we all started out in good faith, Miss Manners, to make the evening agreeable to you. We feel you are exiles, so to speak. That hymn always fires me! I'll withdraw."

"Come, Patty!" insisted Virginia, magnificently,

ignoring his robin-like movements and apologetic words.

"Mr. Steevens," now said Catherine, "I beg you will remain. Your apology was unnecessary. If you have feelings, Miss Manners, Mr. Steevens may be excused for having feelings, also. You asked for the song. You should accept the consequences. Surely, Southerners have a sense of justice."

"Indeed, indeed, they have!" And Patty sprang to her feet. "The hymn is a noble hymn, although it does not voice my sentiments nor Virginia's. We don't feel that the So'th is before God's judgment-seat. But that is no matter. Mary sang at Virginia's request — and I think more of her for singing it with her whole soul — and — and — I like Mr. Steevens because his patriotism did get the better of him — and — I love my sister Virginia because her loyalty was stronger than her curiosity, after all. Virginia, you are in fault, and for the sake of The Cause tell Miss Schuyler so."

Virginia stared at Patty in amazement. Never before had this younger sister dared bring her publicly to task. She trembled with temper and a many-sided indignation. But Patty had challenged her chivalry,— an uppermost note in her temperament, always; and there stood Catherine, queenly, her blue eyes flashing. Above all, Virginia knew that she had been foolishly pugnacious. Like a black cloud rolling away from a summer sky, her frown melted, a tender, indulgent smile lit her features, and with incomparable graciousness and gracefulness she turned to Catherine, whose hands she took, and said: "Forgive me: I have a So'thern heart and a So'thern temper. I forgot myself."

Catherine was not pleased with Virginia's monopoly of generous impulse, but she accepted the overture.

Virginia now turned to Timothy, and, shaking her head nonchalantly at him, said, "Be good friends with

me once more, will you?" Walking over to Mary, she put her arms around her, and kissed her. In some indefinable way, she succeeded in appearing both injured and magnanimous.

For a few moments a hostile embarrassment settled upon the Northerners, and Patty felt that The Cause was in poor keeping as far as its Mulholland representatives were concerned. But, finally, everybody rallied. Catherine proposed the Virginia reel in compliment to the sisters, and the dance began.

When can young folks resist the spirit of fellowship in dancing? As those white arms arched above the bent heads, as those hands full of life and feeling clasped together, and the long rows stepped forward and retreated, smiling, bowing, and again advancing and retreating, as the couples marched and circled and again re-formed, courtesying, exchanging partners, and saluting, the hatchet of civil feud was buried; and, to all concerned, the scene of the evening sank into the background of memory as a display of patriotism likely to be repeated in myriad forms before the war was over.

When Virginia, who was the last guest to leave, approached the front door, and found her hostess standing there alone, she whispered, "I made a fool of myself," and, imprinting a warm kiss on Catherine's face, turned quickly away.

Catherine felt obliged to take her on faith; but it was Patty on whom her clear, trustworthy gaze rested, as she watched the sisters descend the steps.

## VIII.

**P**REPARATORY to their departure to the farm, Mrs. Manners gave her nieces a tea-party. The ample piazzas and fine lawn afforded means for much informal intercourse ; and, although Virginia absorbed the trio of young men, her monopoly was less apparent than it would have been in more contracted surroundings.

Continental writers, and notably Thackeray, lay stress on woman's jealousy ; but its initiatory stages are frequently overlooked. A young girl's nature is not the unwritten page of which the poet sings. It is covered with record of a kind,—with the cryptogram of emotion ; and she offers the mysterious script under the unseen and unsuspected guidance of mother nature. It is the enigma of her youth, most innocent, most pathetic ; and the man who can decipher the meaning usually meets with her surrender. It is sufficient to her that she is understood. Appreciation of a kind is more desirable to most girls than no appreciation whatever. So long as girls have even the show of an environment, so long as each feels rather than sees that the other is taking only her fair chance, the instinctive generosity among them is as large as that among boys.

The Mulholland circle which the Southerners entered was like many another village group during the war. It had been defrauded of its lovers, actual and prospective. According to the social ethics of those simple days, girls whose accepted lovers were in the army were expected to hold themselves aloof with something of the withdrawal of a wife whose husband is ill or in great danger. They were enshrined in a kind of consecrated esteem,—a reward in itself. But many girls were left stranded on the verge of interesting possibilities, and the handful of single men who stayed at home became of dangerous importance.

Thomas Robotham, before the war, was a feminine last resort. Timothy Steevens, beloved not only by the children, but by their elders as well, had long ago been set aside as not a marrying man, and was treasured as a communistic social possession. As for Frank Livingston, he had worshipped Catherine Schuyler ever since they were children.

It was upon a neighbourhood with such a history that Virginia alighted like some brilliant tropical bird.

At one side of the Manners house was an enormous willow, its gigantic trunk encompassed with a rustic seat. Hither, after the high tea at which Virginia and her aunt had presided, Frank had wandered with Catherine. The day had been warm, and a week's continued heat had scorched the lawn. But under the willow the grass was vividly green, and the setting sun streaked it with light. Catherine was sitting a little apart from Frank, talking with confidential comradeship, when the long branches of the tree were swept aside, and Virginia appeared.

"Ah, I've caught you!" she cried, the eternal sex question in her laughing eyes. "Come see the picture, Mr. Steevens."

Thus adjured, the pliant Timothy pushed inside.

As in all still, serene natures, so in Catherine's there were reservations not to be trifled with. A delicate, shadowy flush, almost like a reflection, overspread her face. She rested her head against the tree, her displeased glance holding Virginia momentarily in check. But no one had ever really daunted Virginia; and, sweeping leisurely over the sunlit space, she paused an appreciable instant in front of the friends, turned, sank gracefully between them, and glanced provocatively from one to the other.

To Catherine, less the act than its implication was objectionable. She drew slightly away.

Virginia, unnoticing, set herself the easy task of

charming Frank, who looked perplexed, amused, and irresolute; but when Timothy, intent that Catherine should be entertained, took a seat beside her, Frank surrendered to the influence of those alluring black eyes and the magnetism of Virginia's presence.

Hearing Mary at the piano, Virginia sprang to her feet, the sudden movement hurling her fan some distance forward. Frank hastened to pick it up, and, as if unaware, walked away with her. As he parted the branches, and she stepped between them, she beckoned Catherine and Steevens with a motion half invitation, half command, and sauntered on.

Catherine remained seated, her fine, haughty features speculative. She was realising for the first time in her life her relation to Frank, and that her jealousy was less of love and Virginia's power than of her own dignity. She knew that Virginia would never waste a thought on the niceties of the situation from which each had emerged with such a difference of temper, and that the wordless battle between them had probably only just begun. She had delicate perceptions, quick intuitions. Virginia possessed strong instincts, an aggressive nature, keen ambition, and both girls no small measure of intellectual capacity. Catherine foresaw that she would doubtless yield point after point as not worth what would seem to her the vulgar effort, and she felt troubled and perplexed; but she glanced at Timothy, finally, with a freedom of smile and expression as if she had dismissed a disagreeable experience, and they returned to the house.

## IX.

THE following week, and soon after the early breakfast so foreign to Virginia's leisurely habits, old Mr. Manners appeared one morning with two vehicles.

Little John, eager for the flitting to the farm, ran hither and thither in high excitement. Mrs. Manners came downstairs with her hands full of packages and bundles, the inevitable final overflow. Her nieces, much against their private inclination, carried their own satchels ; and John marched with an umbrella over his shoulder in front of Betsy, who bore the cat and her six kittens in a huge basket, the cover well tied down, and a vociferous miauling going on inside.

Mr. Manners and his man carried the trunks to the cart. The various bundles and bags were fitted in under the seat, and then Betsy mounted. The basket of cats was placed on her knees ; and the man, springing in beside her, drove away.

Patty had watched her grandfather in a kind of loving wonder assist his man. She noticed the perspiration on his forehead and the tremble in his hands. As he helped her in making the high, precarious ascent into the carryall, he must have seen or felt her sympathy ; for his touch lingered as she sprang.

Virginia held back with a mellow laugh. " You look like Noah, grandfather, putting us into the ark. We ought all to be kangaroos to leap in safe."

Mr. Manners had for years kept the edge of his pride sharpened because of his son Gordon's marriage. He had felt elated and depressed both, when Gordon had literally married into one of "the first families of Virginia,"—stubbornly elated, because it was a proper match for any son of his ; and depressed lest, after all, the Copleys should not give the Manners their proper

due. Many a new piece of furniture had crept into the farmstead because of this marriage. Many an outing had been taken to Saratoga and the White Mountains because the Copleys went to such places. The New Jersey planter had, in fact, spent thousands of dollars to show that the Manners were practically on the same footing as the Copleys, but had persistently refused to visit Gordon's family, lest he should be overtaken with convictions he did not wish to cherish concerning his son's superior environment.

Meanwhile he had kept open house for the Southerners summer after summer, but, under the dominance of the same obstinate pride, had never modified his personal habits. It suited his idea of his independence to let the house—after a rather halting fashion, it is true—keep pace with the times; while he himself drove, when it pleased him to do so, with rope harness, and dressed in a style in no wise distinguishing him from his helpers on the farm.

Virginia was sensitively conscious of his incongruities, and combative. It irritated her to ride in the carryall, like an ordinary countrywoman. She hated its stage-like equipment. She hated the look of the poorly matched horses, with their motley harness. She could not understand why her grandfather did not keep a body servant, so that his clumsy garments should at least appear well cared for.

When she lingered, therefore, with her significant glance resting on his dusty coat, in spite of himself he gave it a nervous look, and saw for the first time that it was powdered with flour.

"We brought a load of wheat to market," he said with a grim smile of justification and obstinacy. "Wheat's going up."

Virginia tried to appear tolerant.

"Everybody knows me," asserted the old man, with

a look of humour and defiance blended. "It doesn't matter how I dress or what I do." And his tone voiced the impression so prevalent in the North early in the century,—that it was, on the whole, creditable to disguise rather than enhance one's social or financial value.

"When we are settled at the farm, grandfather, I am going to take charge of your clothing my own self," said Virginia, authoritatively, thus spoiling her promise by her assumption.

"Won't you let me do something for you?" cried Patty, in loving anxiety; and, Mr. Manners's face lighting up with tenderness, he nodded to her fondly, but with an unmistakable air of business promptitude he put his hands on Virginia's waist, compelling her to ascend. "There," he said harshly, giving her an impelling shove as her head ducked under the low roof of the clumsy vehicle,—"there you are, landed high and dry in Noah's ark. Your grandmother Manners rode in it all her life."

"She was very much to be pitied," retorted Virginia, good-naturedly. "You ought never to have let her ride in anything but a fine carriage, as rich as you are, grandfather. But I don't mind, now I am in. And I am glad you have all the curtains up—only I think it is going to rain."

"No, it isn't: it's going to be hot, that's all." And Mr. Manners, mounting, seized the reins in his sunburned, ungloved hands, and drove leisurely through the broad, shady streets, acknowledging with a solemn nod many a respectful salutation.

It had rained during the night, and the air was full of pearly tints as they came into the open country. The weeping sunlight filtered through strata of filmy grey cloud, the red dust was laid, and pools of clear water stood along the roadside. The worm fences looked soaked and clean, and delicate alpine tints of greys and

greens coloured the mossy rails. The red vines sprinkled with bursting leaves, the bushes with their new leaves, and the patches of forest, exquisitely, ethereally verdant, through which they rode, seemed waiting for the hot kiss of the sun.

Once, at little John's request, the old man stopped the horses in a belt of woods; and the boy clambered out to pick some flowers shooting up pallid, starry blossoms out of last year's mould of life and verdure. When he was again ensconced in the carryall, he hesitated over his flowers, then threw them admiringly into Patty's lap, while looking shamefacedly and lovingly at his mother. Mrs. Manners took his face in her hands and kissed it, her thought leaping with a pang into John's first manhood. They rode on, one of the little fellow's chubby hands in hers, the other strained over the back of the seat and clasped in Patty's.

The homestead was less than an hour's ride from Mulholland, but to Virginia the distance was interminable. The long red road stretched straight ahead over the almost level land, like a ribbon fluttered by the wind. On every hand the soil gave evidence of the highest cultivation, the vast fields, many acres in extent, resembling the tilled portions of Germany and France. At intervals along the horizon, dark streaks of pine forest etched the silvery sky; while in the near foreground the peach orchards, their fruit already set and the foliage glistening with covert tints of roan, forecast the later season, when the trees, bending under their burden, would blush with plenty. Here and there the farms were dotted with strawberry-pickers, while up from strips of meadow rose the whirring rumble of the mower. Butterflies sailed aloft, disturbed in their way-side dances by the travel on the road. A lark cut the air with a wedge of heavenly song, transmuting Virginia's indefinable discontent into a premonition of immortality, but brief as the thrilling warble of the bird,

At last Mr. Manners turned his plodding team into a long, grassy lane, fenced on either side and winding up a slight eminence, the summit of which showed a thick growth of trees.

John asked to get out, and ran on ahead to a big, whitewashed gate, which he triumphantly swung open in the very face of the horses.

Patty viewed the scene before her with the reminiscence of love; but over Virginia's handsome features flitted an expression of scrutiny and longing, as if the farmstead were sure to look unattractive and worse than her recollection.

In reality, the house and its environment presented a sequestered picture of rural beauty. Around the sides and rear clustered in tangled luxuriance pines and oaks, the foliage of which darkened the low, spreading roof, and kept up a constant whisper of cool sound. An indifferently cared for but ample lawn sloped from the front of the house and terminated in a meadow, where the rank, tall greenness waved in the now clear sunlight with emerald transparency, and joined the pines stretching seaward in an extensive forest.

Some little distance away stood a goodly group of barns, shining with chalky brightness from a recent coat of whitewash. The house, too, showed in bold relief for the same reason, while strips of rustic picket fence, also whitewashed, gleamed through the vines and under the trees.

Nobody appeared as the carryall halted in front of the long, low house. A sound of voices and of numerous fowls floated intermittently from the barns, but the solitude about the house was lonesome as they dismounted.

"I expect Judy's asleep," said Mr. Manners, half apologetically. "She is getting old, like myself; and I can't blame her. You must all make yourselves at

home. The house is yours, daughter. Do whatever you want with it." He sighed, and led the way.

Perfect order was evident on every hand, but also the vacant, melancholy aspect of disuse. The hall looked broader and longer than it was because of the low ceiling, brought still lower by huge maps occupying the broader spaces. Virginia idly noted that one was a map of the United States of ancient date, on which the North-west Territory and the Louisiana Purchase indicated a wilderness, while the other showed an intricate, meandering network of lines, like a plan of inner fortifications, or of the watercourses in the Dismal Swamp, — the "Plan of Salvation," as its title indicated. Patty recalled with a choking sensation that her grandfather was a Baptist, and that they would therefore probably be quite shut away from the "Church."

Mrs. Manners walked straight through the hall as if she had taken in the situation at a glance, and opened the rear door. A flood of fragrance rushed in,— of roses, pinks, and day lilies. The maps lazily flapped against the painted walls. She threw open the doors of the big, low-ceiled rooms right and left, Mr. Manners watching her with an odd, rested furtiveness, as if she were banishing ghosts.

"Come, girls," she said, "we will go upstairs while grandpa finds Judy. Betsy, fill your hands, and go ahead and open the blinds. Here, John, be a man, and carry Patty's satchel."

John scurried up the shallow stairs with their spindling baluster, clutching at Betsy's feet as she preceded him, and quickening her ascent. Virginia unconsciously ducked her head at the first landing, where the ceiling of the upper half-story sloped dangerously low; but, Patty assuring her that she could just clear it, tall as she was, she drew herself erect with relieved and haughty indifference, and went on.

There were four big chambers in the second story, with sloping, whitewashed walls, tiny, three-paned windows under the eaves, and long, narrow windows, half the width of the downstairs ones, in the gable ends.

As Virginia lingered on the threshold of the chamber assigned to Patty and herself, her unrest and latent temper communicated themselves; and John looked up to her, puzzled, apprehensive, and sober, while Betsy's obvious solicitude only served to increase her irritation.

The saving virtue of the rooms was their size. They were immense. The matting on the floor, the cotton curtains with their knotted fringe, the high mahogany beds, with their white counterpanes and valances fringed like the curtains, the English wash-stands of ample dimensions and with abundant furnishings, suggested summer comfort and cleanliness of a kind not to be despised. The windows were already open, and a honeysuckle-scented breeze fed the natural draft.

But these salient and æsthetic features Virginia overlooked, for in matters pertaining to her physical comfort she was practical. She saw at a glance that there was neither closet nor wardrobe. She appreciated exactly the limits of the high, prim mahogany bureau, with its tiny swivel mirror, its glass-knobbed, shallow drawers. Patty and she had been used to "spreading around," with some one always at hand to "pick up" after them; and the long, hot summer was upon them, with a climate often as torrid as that of South Carolina.

Mrs. Manners watched her niece with displeasure. Considering the momentous war news imminent, she herself had made a tremendous sacrifice in leaving Mulholland; but she had thought it worth while, in order to relieve the loneliness of an old man. It would have suited her pride and physical ease to have gone to her own home, visible through the trees at the side of the house; but, in this supreme moment of national be-

reavement, she felt her place was with her husband's father. She loved space and conveniences, and had always been accustomed to them ; and a severity having an edge of scorn was in her clear, blue eyes as she preceded Virginia into the chamber.

"Here is a long row of hooks for your frocks, and I will have Betsy make a calico curtain to cover them from the dust. If you are orderly, I am sure you will get along very well ; and the summer will soon pass."

"We haven't anything else to do, aunt, but keep ourselves and our things in order. These funny little cabin windows will be delightful to peer through when we lie in bed. Oh, I'm so glad to be here!" Patty spoke with disconnected appreciation, and with the anxious perception, half ludicrous, half pathetic, of the peace-loving person who, in doing double duty, appears to pose, and hates herself accordingly.

At this moment a hurried step sounded in the hall ; and, turning, Virginia beheld Judy.

Judy was a shrewd-featured mulatto, thin and grizzled ; but she was one of the landmarks in Virginia's life, and the sight of her restored the young girl's good nature.

"Land sakes alive, Miss Jinnie ! I 'clar', I'se too 'shamed to look you in de face ! But I'se gittin' old, I is ; en', when I got t'ings ready en' jes' sot a-waitin', I dropped off."

Judy had ignored everybody else in the gladness and absorption of her welcome. She was a survival of New Jersey slavery, as her parents had belonged to old Mr. Manners' father and Judy herself had been raised a bond-woman. Her relatives still lived among the pines, where they led a hand-to-mouth existence, and formed part of a vagrant community, despised by the whites, but useful, occasionally, for farm or domestic service. Among her own people, therefore, Judy, as housekeeper of the Manners' farmstead, was a princess in Israel,

and, with the tacit connivance of her master, had a numerous retinue frequenting the back doors. Mrs. Manners' advent, with Betsy in her train, was not over-welcome to Judy. To Patty she was indifferent. But to Virginia, whom she had cared for as a baby and small child through several summers, she was devoted; and Virginia was fond of her, too, after a fashion.

In the course of the afternoon, everybody settled down. John was hailed as an acquisition among the men, and stayed out of doors till supper time, when he appeared with an injured red squirrel for a pet, and weary with hoeing a bed of ground nuts given to him for his own property. Patty had put bouquets in all the rooms, and unpacked for both herself and her sister. Virginia had unlocked the piano, and the house resounded with her marches and waltzes. Betsy and Judy had already engaged in a stiff quarrel, and were barely on speaking terms when the family went out to supper.

That old-fashioned, country dining-room! Through its small-paned windows still shone the sun. The gentle breeze entered, too, and waved the table-cloth with the cool suggestion of a flapping sail. Abundance had always crowned that board, around which four sons had grown to manhood, and to which they had brought back with pride and love their own children. The clock on the mantel-piece was a new-fashioned one,—Jared's contribution,—and stood between colonial brass candlesticks, with huge snuffers. The china was Gordon's gift, and did not shame the quaint silver service of evident antiquity, with its pots and pitchers standing on high, finical legs. The linen had been spun under the homestead roof long years before. The rag carpet had been sewed by hands now still, out of pieces representing the garments of an entire generation. And most of the food served that May evening had had its

being on the farm. The hot biscuit were flaky and white with home-grown flour. The butter was the essence of the rich meadows, from which already resounded, like the stridulation of myriad stringed instruments, the grateful nocturne of the frogs. The strawberries were the choicest culling of acres of fruit crimsoning for the New York markets, the luscious broiled ham once fattened porkers wandering in hordes, like boars of Britain, underneath the spreading oaks. The omelette was the trophy from hens whose maternal clucks subsided in comfortable chuckles as they led their broods where earth-life crawled forth to feel the evening dampness. Radishes and cucumbers from the near-by garden, cottage cheese saturated with cream, and pitchers of warm, new milk made side dishes no Epicurean could have slighted.

The chairs were of all ages and sizes ; and their occupants formed a picturesque sky-line of heads and shoulders, not without artistic value.

When Mr. Manners bowed his head in blessing, he felt tender and grateful because chairs long vacant were filled by his own folk, and he could once more provide for a houseful.

While the family were at supper, the evening mail from Mulholland was brought in. Virginia received a newspaper containing a long and highly wrought account of her passage through the lines, subsidiary, however, to a detailed narrative of the family and career of Captain George Featherstone. Her eyes sparkled. She had established a connection with one of her admirers.

For a month Mrs. Manners had felt consumed with apprehension. Her recollection of events at the time of the battle of the Wilderness remained a curious blank except as it embodied one memory,—the memory of the terrible waiting till she knew that Colonel Manners had passed through the three days' struggle

uninjured. Ever since, when she lay down at night, voluminous, gigantic curtains, dyed in blood, crimsoned before her. When she dreamed, she plunged through swamps or tore herself on vines and rocks while seeking, but never finding him who was marching—marching! Or she started out of sleep to discover herself sitting up in bed, her ears straining to hear the boom of cannon or her arms extended for the form which must follow the step she was sure had paused at her door. If little John had not slumbered beside her, nothing could have convinced her that these nightly experiences were delusions. Sometimes she would clasp John in her arms, and almost smother him in her frantic grief and tenderness. It would seem as if the little fellow had some strange, reciprocal knowledge of her powers of sympathy and love; for the look of these things was in his face. He carried about with him the atmosphere of the children whom everybody loves and who awaken a kind of spontaneous soul purification, as if they were world-children, and intended pre-eminently as consolers and comforters,—adumbrations of the One who voluntarily took upon himself the form of a little child.

When the man who had brought the mail in handed Mrs. Manners a letter, she took it with a kind of hushed solemnity, and drew a long breath as a swimmer does when he sees a swell coming.

John looked up at her wistfully, and then laid his head on her breast and waited, his eyes fixed on Patty as if he would see if she were kin of his soul at such a moment, also. Patty smiled, and John dropped his eyes with a subtle, childlike satisfaction of expression.

The letter was dated the twenty-fourth; and Cornelia presently glanced towards Mr. Manners, each feature chiselled with ecstatic radiance. "He is safe, father. Rufus has gone through the twelve days without a wound!" She began to read aloud snatches from her

husband's account of the fifteen miles of marching between the Wilderness and Spottsylvania: "General Warren still led our corps, and we hoped to make a rapid advance; but the road proved to be obstructed at frequent intervals by barricades. Lee's vigilance never relaxes. He is a great strategist. Several of our men were killed while chopping away these obstructions, and we were from nine o'clock at night till eight the next morning in reaching a clearing where the first real fighting began." "But here, father"— And Mrs. Manners handed a portion of the letter to him while she read on for herself with breathless intensity. "O Patty! Virginia! he has seen your father! Your father is well, too."

"What's that?" And Mr. Manners leaned forward, his fist clenched on the table.

"Rufus and Gordon met after the siege of Spottsylvania. They talked across the lines, and Gordon said he would give a thousand-dollar nigger for a couple of whole linen shirts."

"I'll get the shirts through to him; but he'll never have a thousand-dollar nigger nor a one-dollar nigger again, thank the Lord! What else did Gordon say?"

"He sent his love to his dear girls." Mrs. Manners glanced at her nieces, and, smiling indulgently, continued, "He said he expected the war to end by autumn, and to see them the belles of the Confederate capital next winter."

"Humph!" ejaculated the old man, with a wistful, contradictory, expectant air. "Is that all?"

"He sent his love to you, father, and his gratitude for the protection you are affording his daughters."

"Humph!" And Mr. Manners wiped his eyes, while his lips worked and he put his fingers up to conceal the tremor.

"O auntie," gasped Patty, "to think that we can go to sleep to-night and know they are safe!"

"Yes, it is a happy night. A letter from my son yesterday and one from my husband to-day — and both safe!"

"And papa, too, auntie!"

"Yes, dear, I do not forget him." Mrs. Manners read on, handing one closely written sheet after another to her father as she finished it.

When Mr. Manners had read the entire letter twice through, he rose slowly, took his cane and hat, and sauntered meditatively out of doors. His way led back of the house to a picket fence intersecting the grove between his plantation and the estate of Colonel Alexander Boudinot, Cornelia's father.

From time immemorial this fence had been the trysting-place of the two old men. Over its pickets, concealed in summer by a tangle of wistaria, clematis, and ivy, they discussed the crops, exchanged views of a domestic nature, and indulged in retrospection. They reviewed and combated, according to their respective party shibboleths, Federalist and anti-Federalist, Federalist as opposed to Republican or Democratic-Republican, Whig as opposed to Republican or Democrat, and finally Republican *versus* Democrat.

Colonel Boudinot would rally his neighbour on being Federalist, Whig, and finally Republican, insisting that the name "Republican" for the party in power was paradoxical because it originally stood for state rights, and quoted Jefferson, Madison, and Randolph as Republicans who opposed a United States bank and a United States assumption of state debts, and Madison as a Republican who drafted the 1798-99 resolutions which embodied the doctrine of state rights.

Mr. Manners would retort that the name was too large for the party which had discarded it, and that, whatever its original signification, from 1850 till 1860 it had meant an undivided union.

As Mr. Manners came in sight of the fence, Colonel Boudinot appeared, descending the steps of his piazza.

"The Boudinot mansion," as it was called in the county, was a spacious, square structure, built after a fashion much affected in New Jersey before the Civil War. A broad, two-story piazza, interrupted only by a narrow L at the rear for kitchen and servants' quarters, surrounded it on all sides. A cupola as square as the house crowned the flat roof, under which numerous narrow windows produced a draft through the attic and cooled the high-ceiled, immense, square chambers underneath. The ceiling of the piazza was plastered so substantially that neither wind nor rain had cracked or loosened the tough cement. The windows on the first floor were long, and opened like doors on the piazza. Within, as in all well-built country houses of the time, there was a wide hall running through the centre, with parlours on one side divided by mahogany folding-doors, and on the other side, two square rooms united by a passage containing the staircase and connected with the main hall by an arch. Whatever the heat, there was always a breeze in the Boudinot mansion.

The house suggested provision for the most generous hospitality, but to the colonel hospitality was a minor consideration. He had built it as his idea of a home, and, when it was completed and furnished, had brought his bride there, a girl of sixteen; and they were married in their own front parlour.

His wife had been his bride ever since; and the big house, in consequence, never seemed lonesome to him, even when for weeks together no visitor crossed the threshold. Whether such seclusion was as welcome to Mrs. Boudinot was an open question among her acquaintances. Certainly, she had never sought an intimacy or encouraged one; and, although friendly, she proved inaccessible. She was a woman who piqued curiosity; and a

little kindness, a slight courtesy from her, was cherished, perhaps, for more than it was worth because of a precious quality about her of which she appeared unconscious and which did not provoke antagonism. Women who are loved absorbingly through a long period of years, and held tenaciously by the lover to the full letter of their compact, seem to have this quality.

Mrs. Boudinot sat in a willow chair on the piazza, hem-stitching a handkerchief as her husband started towards the fence. There was a glimmer of affectionate amusement in her eyes as she watched him saunter under the trees. The sunset light threw into bold relief his tall, slim figure in a costume showing little variation from year to year. He wore a dark blue military coat with brass buttons, and his shirt ruffle emphasised the distinction of his appearance. A big, square seal dangled from his fob. A drab crushed hat and drab gaiters lent something almost fanciful to an otherwise impressive and stately presence. The contrast between him and Mr. Manners was great as the two men came together.

Each cherished a secret envy of the other. Mr. Manners would have liked to look and act after the semblance of the colonel if it could have been according to nature. Colonel Boudinot beheld his neighbour, first and last, as the father of four sons who had upheld the honour of their name, and won influence and respect for themselves. But neither surmised the basis of the other's admiration, for the planter's literalness and dogged honesty and apparently careless indifference in dress had never modified according to circumstances; while Colonel Boudinot had a long list of illustrations at his tongue's end to prove that the man whose children were all girls was lucky.

When they met at the fence, they nodded and looked away, like two dogs deciding whether to fight or be friendly.

The colonel struck a match, and lighted a cigar. Mr. Manners drew a clay pipe from an inside pocket and filled it, using his thumb to give the tobacco a final squeeze. The men then put their heads together, the end of the colonel's cigar thrust into the bowl of the pipe, and for a few seconds there was a vigorous puffing, like that of a distant locomotive climbing a grade. Finally, when two thin spirals of smoke were circling up in the still clearness of the atmosphere, the colonel asked,—

“Heard any news to-day?”

“Cornelia got a letter from Rufus to-night.”

“Ah?” There was a remote, cool inspection of his neighbour on the colonel's part, which meant “enviable father of a veteran of the Potomac,” although Mr. Manners supposed the colonel thought himself well off to be free from paternal anxiety. Moreover, Colonel Boudinot was not even a War Democrat. He was a “Copperhead,”—in other words, a sympathiser with the Confederates, one of a class of thinkers during the war numerous in New Jersey, a state whose comparatively recent manumission of its slaves and whose political sentiment, as expressive of its location (a portion of it lying in the same latitude as Maryland and Northern Virginia), still remains for the impartial historian to take into account.

“And Rufus and Gordon saw each other, and talked across the lines. It beats all, doesn't it?”

“Yes, it does.” The colonel puffed contemplatively.

“Well, Grant is hammering away still. He didn't take Spottsylvania, but he is fifteen miles nearer Richmond.”

“He has killed forty thousand men since he crossed the Rapidan,” replied the colonel. “Wonderful generalship! I knew Grant eighteen years ago in the Mexican War. I didn't take any stock in him then, and don't now. He can't manoeuvre.”

"Manœuvring in war is treachery in peace. Grant is a blunt, straightforward, up-and-down man," replied Mr. Manners.

"You wouldn't call Lee treacherous, would you, because he is a great strategist?"

"He is a bear up a tree. There is nothing left for him but strategy."

"He got out of the tree in the Wilderness in time to occupy the ridge north of Spottsylvania Court-house and surprise the Unionists when they were marching across that clearing."

"They reached the woods all the same on the other side of the clearing."

"They couldn't have done it if it hadn't been for Warren's generalship," said the colonel, savagely.

"What was Warren for but to prove his generalship?" The planter's small, deep-set eyes glowered as hotly as the bowl of his pipe. "And look at the Eighty-third Pennsylvania! Tired as they were with an all-night's march, they fought hand to hand with the rebels, and hauled them out of their works. The whole corps came into line right under the nose of the enemy, and fell to intrenching of their own accord."

"Why didn't Warren seize his advantage, eh?" And the colonel's voice was taunting. "He was waiting for Sedgwick. And, when Sedgwick did move, they couldn't decide how and when to attack. Why didn't Hancock forge ahead, eh? Because he stayed up there at Todd's Tavern in the Wilderness with General Mead, waiting to see if Lee would attack the Unionists in the rear. It looks as if Lee were up a tree, doesn't it? with Longstreet occupying the ridge in front of the Unionists at Spottsylvania and the Unionists peering over their shoulders to see if Lee were going to hit their rear. You may call it what you please, strategy or brains; but I say Lee outwitted Grant. He planted

his Grays across Grant's line of march, and held an army almost twice the size of his own battering away for twelve days against his defences along the ridge at Spottsylvania, before Grant could get it into his head that his hammer was no use."

"See here, colonel, do try to be fair! The rebels are on their own ground. Grant isn't fighting for the fun of the thing. He's on his way to Richmond, and he'll get there. He didn't want the Spottsylvania ridge particularly. The rebels may delay him a little,—that's all."

"Nothing can excuse his wanton sacrifice of life; and Sedgwick killed, too, while he was trying to plant that battery. I knew Sedgwick well,—a handsome man,—like a child in the sweetness of his character, but a good soldier!"

"Yes, the whole army loved Sedgwick," mused Mr. Manners; and for a moment it seemed as if the argument would end in kindly sentiment. "It was a Confederate sharpshooter who killed Sedgwick. You can't lay that to Grant."

"Yes, I can. I lay the whole confounded nonsense connected with this forward march to Grant. McClellan tried it. Burnside tried it. Hooker tried it. There seems to be but one Union idea, no matter who the general, for the Virginia campaign. Grant can't originate. Look at his butchering blunder in the assault of May 9!" continued the colonel, warming to a fresh attack, and puffing vigorously at his cigar before continuing. "Wanted to see how big a pile of bodies he could heap up, I suppose. Think of his trying to take a hill, the top of it covered with trees and earthworks, and its ascent protected by artillery and exposed to an enfilade of musketry!"

"Rufus went up that hill, and came down."

The colonel glanced at his neighbour with gloomy indifference.

"Yes,"—Mr. Manners's face beamed with fatherly pride,—“and he was in the night sally, too, against Lee's right centre. He told all about it in his letter to Cornelia. She is coming over as soon as little John goes to bed. Of course, you know as well as I do that we captured four thousand rebels, a lot of artillery, and General Johnston, too. I can't tell it as Rufus does; but you'll read my boy's letter.”

“And, for want of strategy, the whole thing failed,” broke in the colonel. “The dead piled so high that the men couldn't get a footing! Ten thousand Confederates dead and wounded! Ten thousand Unionists dead and wounded! There's civil war for you! That's what these abolitionist, love-your-neighbour-as-yourself principles mean!”

The colonel took off his hat with a gesture of scornful deference.

Mr. Manners removed his pipe, turned it upside down, gently knocked the bowl against a picket the further to empty it, and slowly stuck it into his pocket.

“Colonel Boudinot, you're about the rankest Copperhead in New Jersey! and that is saying a good deal. You mark my words,—Grant will get there!”

The colonel laughed sceptically. “He'd better remember Burnside before Fredericksburg before it is too late. Well”— And he paused, threw away his cigar, and appeared to meditate. “I'm happy to hear, I'm sure, that Gordon and Rufus are safe. Brant seems to be in comfortable quarters at Bermuda Hundred. I am glad Cornelia does not have to worry much about him at present. Does little John seem likely to grow up as sturdy as Brant?”

“John is all right.”

A glow rather than a flush suffused the colonel's face. “I think myself he is promising.” A smile of grandfatherly possession illuminated his thin features.

"His grandmother was sorry, though, that he wasn't a girl. Well, good-night, Mr. Manners. It's a pleasant evening, isn't it?" And the colonel walked away; while the father of four sons wandered towards home, and smiled, as he drew near the lonely house, to see lights in the parlour once more and to hear singing, even though Virginia was making the grove melodious with "Away down South in Dixie."

## X.

CORNELIA set out with little John one morning soon after breakfast to go to see her mother. They chose the longer way, down the lane and along the highway to the Boudinot drive, winding by a gradual ascent and bordered with hemlocks. At the top of the hill the hemlocks yielded to oaks, and these again were lost in the grove of many varieties of forest trees surrounding the house.

The ridge occupied by the two homesteads overlooked the undulating landscape for miles, and usually caught the first stir of the sea-breeze springing up in the afternoon.

To the east spread the Manners' farm; and to the west, and comprising nearly as much land, stretched the Boudinot estate. But the Manners property was part of the original grant assigned to the patentee of the name when East Jersey was apportioned, and with rights vested in the patentees similar to those bestowed upon the patroons along the Hudson. It had descended from father to son ever since; and the Manners name, therefore, meant both property and long tenure of power in the county. Virginia's paternal grandfather would have felt astonished, indeed, could he have dreamed that her toleration of him extended deeper than his shabby, indifferent clothing.

The Boudinots had been more identified with town and city life; but Colonel Boudinot, after a youth spent in Philadelphia and at West Point, had come into possession, through collateral inheritance, of the land adjoining Mr. Manners, and had lived there since his marriage, except during the Mexican War, in which he won the rank of colonel. He had never farmed in the sense that Mr. Manners had. There were tracts on his estate from which the primeval

forest had never been cut. These he had intersected with bridle-tracks, along which it was his delight to take a solitary canter on the white horse he always affected. Other portions of his land were devoted to stock-raising and grain; and for these he employed a manager, over whom he kept such a strict rein that his finances prospered on the whole as well as those of his neighbour.

The farmer loved outdoor work for its own sake: it gave vent to the rugged, obstinate traits of his character. The colonel was averse to violent physical effort; but he had a genius for detail, a love of rule, and was ambitious to maintain the appearance of a man with much business on hand.

As Cornelia began to cross the lawn, her mother came to meet her. There was a wonderful resemblance between them, although something in the daughter indicated, if not a bigger nature, a freer scope for those resources which only opportunity and the consciousness of perfect freedom of action can develop. Mrs. Boudinot sometimes regarded her with a wistful, meditative look, as if she saw in Cornelia her own possible larger self.

They walked hand in hand to the house, not saying much, but with that unveiled admission in glance and tone occasionally seen between men, but most rare between women, which implies no personal reserves and absolute mutual trust. Each knew that not a thought, nor a longing, nor a temptation, but was safe in the other's keeping. Not that they talked much together of these things, for they were practical women, and given to silence; but, when they did talk confidentially, the conversation did not conclude on the part of one with the consciousness that she had laid her feeling bare, and on the part of the other that her reservations were, after all, her own. As Cornelia grew to

womanhood, the relation between mother and daughter expanded, until now, when one was elderly and the other in the prime of early middle life, it had reached its perfect flower.

They lingered on the porch to enjoy the beauty of the morning, but chiefly because of their satisfaction in being together once more. A voice called "John," and the little fellow ran inside.

Colonel Boudinot was in his library. Bookcases lined the sides from floor to ceiling; and at first sight numerous huge, dry-looking volumes gave it an air of severe dignity. But many of the big books were Congressional reports which had been accumulating ever since such reports had existed, and few of them had been opened. There were several shelves devoted to travel and the piscatorial art; and the books about angling, from Isaac Walton down, looked well thumbed. From the trout streams in the northern part of the State to deep-sea fishing on the coast, Colonel Boudinot was an authority. Standard French and English novels written prior to the Civil War were in those cases; and the list was a portentous one of tales perused during winter evenings when nothing occurred to interfere with the nightly procession, after the early tea, to the library, of the colonel, Mrs. Boudinot, and the cat. Many works on naval and military tactics, also much worn, were in evidence, as well as several histories. For the rest, the library was an inheritance and an accumulation,—the first portion, law books, which served only to encumber space and increase the leathery odour of the atmosphere; the second portion, works purchased from colporteurs, whom the colonel prided himself on never turning away without a subscription. When asked to aid a Mulholland enterprise, he would conduct the solicitor into his library, point to the colporteur's case, and exclaim, "There,

sir, is the monument of my public spirit and benevolence." But, usually, after this little speech, he entered into a talk resulting in a substantial contribution. Seldom did the colonel let anything pass under his scrutiny without conveying the impression that his hand in the affair was necessary to its success. He cared for his estate, his household, the country, his wife, his cat in the same way,—with an endless, patient, but at the same time aggressive vigilance.

He was sitting at a big oak table in the middle of the room when his grandson entered, and John instantly noticed the deviation in his usual costume. A white Panama hat rested on the back of his head,—a concession to the hot day.

"Don't touch Jacob," said Colonel Boudinot, pointing warningly and admiringly to a pantheristic-looking maltese asleep on a flannel pad on the extreme end of the table. "He has just fallen asleep, and he doesn't like to be disturbed." John regarded the cat from afar, and with the calm studiousness of a child who is told that a thing is of importance, but can't understand the reason why. As Jacob lay there, head and tail hanging over the edge of the table, and his legs and body sprawled in a way to display his length and colour, John thought it would be great fun to tip him wholly over. Instead, the boy cast a covert glance at the colonel, as if to ascertain whether his grandfather were silly.

The colonel looked far from silly. His wits were never quite at rest. As he caught John's questioning eyes, his own contracted, a smile flickered over his face, and he began to whistle.

John felt discovered.

The colonel rose, and took a roll of bills from the pocket of his white duck waistcoat. He counted them, and from the other pocket took a similar roll, also

counting it carefully. It seemed to John that his grandfather must be made of money. In reality, the rolls were composed of "shinplasters," the fractional paper currency of war times; and those small pockets contained only three dollars all told.

But the colonel was not through. Diving into his trousers' pockets, he hauled forth in either hand a quantity of coin, rattling it down on the table. He piled the gold pieces in one heap and the silver in another; and John watched him, wide-eyed.

"My boy," he said magnificently, "we are going to Mulholland this morning, you and I; and I am going to put this gold and silver in your father's bank in your name,—in the name of John Alexander Boudinot"—he paused, and added in a pensive tone—"Manners; and you are not to touch it till you are twenty-one. It belongs to a gentleman to have his own bank account, sir!"

The child, hearing himself thus addressed, tried to stretch his height.

Aware that he had made a memory for the boy, the colonel caught him up, set him astride his shoulders, and, holding the small gaithered feet with either hand, went in search of Mrs. Boudinot.

"John and I are going to Mulholland, Mrs. Boudinot." The colonel always thus addressed his wife in the presence of others, even of his immediate family. "We shall get back in time for dinner. Is there any thing you want from town?"

"You might bring a blue fish back with you for supper."

"Wouldn't shad be better, Mrs. Boudinot?"

"Why—yes!" replied the lady, with animation.

Her father went off with John; and Cornelia inquired, "Why did you say shad, mother, when you had asked for blue fish?"

## The Grapes of Wrath

"It was the shad I really wanted," replied Mrs. Boudinot, triumphantly. "I have turned over a new leaf with your father. Of course, he will find it out soon; but, till he does, I shall have a nervous rest."

Cornelia patted her hand tenderly. They sat in silence a minute. "Mother, you are a saint."

"On the contrary, Cornelia," and Mrs. Boudinot smiled deprecatingly. "Your father's passion for managing the details of my life is certainly wearing, although I have to admit that he does it admirably."

"But the luxury, mother dear, the luxury of having one's own way in trifles!" The daughter drew a big sigh. "I believe you have forgotten what it means."

"No, I haven't." And an intense expression stole into the mother's blue eyes, never without a wistfulness puzzling to many in a woman who was so well cared for. "I had to make a choice long ago, dear; and it took me months to do it. Sometimes the old fierceness of that self-surrender stirs in my heart now, and I am unhappy for days. When you were a little thing, I used to combat your father's passion for managing the housekeeping. But it was no use, Cornelia. He always outgeneralled me. It was his military instinct, I suppose. He ought to be in the army this minute. But he is contented with his multifarious small concerns here,—with the management of the bank accounts of his employees, with advising Tom Miller when to sell stock and Mrs. Dowd how to doctor her children. He would have made a good priest, a good school-teacher. Your father would have made a splendid general."

"I am not sure, mother," said Cornelia, meditatively. "He would exhaust himself in the minutiae of camp-life, I am afraid. I have a great admiration and love for father—of course!" as if afraid her clearer vision were in itself disloyal.

"Daughter," and there was a slight tremulousness in the older woman's voice, "I realised long ago, if I had my own way about my house and myself, your father would never understand it. He is that type of man. It had to be a choice between my will and his love. His love was worth more than my will to me; and so I'm the kind of woman I am."

"O mother, mother!" and there were tears in Cornelia's voice. "You need to see more people, to mix with the world. This house seems to me, sometimes, like a lovely prison. You have no friends,—of your very own, I mean. You are just a beautiful moon, shining in father's light. Father has never been able to absorb me. What a time Rufus and I had to get married! Wasn't it funny? In his way, father was very fond of Rufus, too."

"Father is father." And Mrs. Boudinot appeared really able to dismiss the subject with this philosophical remark. "Come upstairs. I want to show you my new dress."

Meanwhile the colonel and his grandson were jogging towards Mulholland in a light carriage as dapper as its owner. The vehicle was overhauled every spring, and it shone with pitchy blackness. The white feather of the whip, flicking the flies from the white horse, was an anemometer of the colonel's thought, evidently unusually changing, as the whip was at all points of the compass in a minute. A fine air sucked under the hood. Against the background of the straight red road showed the big Panama hat and the white cap of little John, in which a small flag was fluttering.

"Grandpa," said John, after a long silence filled with studious thought, "where's the Souf?"

The colonel pointed to where the pines showed black against the horizon in the intense light.

John's finger followed the direction indicated; and he continued to hold his hand extended with a solemn, satisfied expression. When they turned towards the town, he lost his bearings. "Where's the Souf, now, grandpa?"

The colonel explained again, and again John's finger was the needle to his mental compass.

"Why do you want to know?" asked his grandfather.

"It's where papa is," replied John, his soul in his voice, and as if the capacity of the South were filled with the paternal ideal he was projecting.

The colonel fell into a study, which ended in a question,— "Wouldn't you like to have a little sister, my boy?"

John shook his head. "I want anodder brudder. Boys grow up and go to war."

They now entered Mulholland; and presently the child was absorbed in two possessions,— one of which was a letter from his father and the other a bank book.

Over and over on the road home the colonel had to read the letter and explain the single record on the fair blankness of the bank book.

After going a considerable distance, they turned off down a lane where the grass-grown tracks indicated infrequent use. The lane ended in front of a stone house, stucco-covered, of a style common in the northern part of New Jersey, but rare in the midland districts. Far and wide, therefore, the place was known as the "cement house."

It was a roomy building, with a hip roof and small oval windows in the gables, looking like spectacles. There was a wing facing the front, the steep roof of which extended till it covered the veranda also. The porch of the main house looked dilapidated and unused; and a well in front of the wing, with a long rail for a sweep, stood in the middle of a weedy grass plot.

As the colonel drew up, the moss-grown bricks around the well-curb were dripping; and a young woman, who had just filled a huge tin pail, set it down on the bricks, and stepped forward.

"Good-morning, Hannah." The colonel leaned forward to flick a horse-fly from the well-sweep. "I suppose you are making money hand over fist these days, eh?" He glanced at her with an idle curiosity lighting up his handsome features, but not until after he had tried to prod some of the moss loose between the bricks with the butt of his whip. "That's a nasty place when it is wet. Why don't you weed out the moss?"

By this time Hannah's silence, and a halt in his own observations and efforts, led the colonel to bestow a sharper glance upon her.

She stood erect, her hands folded in front of her, her steady gaze meeting his with mingled pride and displeasure. The noon sun played with the warm tints of her dark hair, and silhouetted the outline of her throat and features. Her attitude was full of natural dignity; and, although she was of medium height and slight, the fine pose of her head and shoulders conveyed the impression of tallness.

"Is Mrs. Rodman at home?" he inquired imper turbably, but in a tone of extreme respect.

"Will you come inside and see mother, Colonel Boudinot?"

"If she will excuse the lack of ceremony,"—and he gave Hannah a charming smile,—"I should feel obliged to her if she would step out to the carriage."

After a delay long enough for him to begin to feel impatient, Mrs. Rodman came. She looked like a woman worn with grief, disappointment, and hard work; but she addressed him as an equal.

"I called for the interest due on the first," he said.  
"It is now the tenth."

"I haven't got it, colonel." There was a strained huskiness in her voice. "But I shall have it. My pension will be due on the twentieth. Can you wait till the twentieth?"

He whistled thoughtfully, touched the horse back and forth with his whip, and looked steadily at Hannah, who piqued his curiosity.

Hannah's manner continued calm and dignified, but there was a nervous fire in her dark grey eyes.

"Mrs. Boudinot has a new silk dress. If you wouldn't mind letting Hannah come over to make it, the sewing could go on the interest. What do you think?"

Hannah Rodman had local fame as a needle-woman. Of late she had made dresses for her neighbours, but always at home,—a condition to which she had hitherto tenaciously adhered.

Mrs. Rodman turned with involuntary wistfulness to her daughter; and the colonel, in his element, watched the living drama. He was not a mercenary man. He did not care whether the interest was paid then or six months later; but Mrs. Rodman's inability was his opportunity for managing a concession obtainable in no other way,—an annoying streak of marnishness, as it had long seemed to Cornelia, in an otherwise admirable character.

"I'll go, mother." Hannah's voice was firm and tender.

The older woman flushed with relief, but the next instant a look of apprehension and pride lit up her sombre features.

"Hannah must eat at the same table with you, Colonel Boudinot, and be in all respect one of the family. If she comes, it must be as company."

"Oh, that'll be all right. I'll send down for her to-morrow morning early! Can you be ready at seven, Hannah?"

"Yes, Colonel Boudinot."

"Is this Cornelia's boy?" asked Mrs. Rodman.

"The youngest. He ought to have been a girl, I say. Didn't you ever see John before?"

"Once, while I was visiting at Squire Marshall's. Mrs. Manners brought her baby over for me to see him."

"Ah — yes. Do you go to the squire's much these days?"

Hannah's shoulders worked nervously. Of late her mother had seemed to develop the futile and boastful loquacity of the unfortunate. She held on to a better past as a cover for the doleful present; while Hannah, with the pitiless honesty of a proud, sincere nature, read their condition at its face value.

Colonel Boudinot drove away, and mother and daughter sauntered into the house. Mrs. Rodman had come out of the main entrance with a ceremonious manner; and they went in here, although the door of the wing, which was nearer, stood wide open. Whenever these two women had a situation to talk over, they went into the front parlour, shut themselves in, although a mile away from a possible listener, and spoke in low tones.

The square, darkened room showed vestiges of better days; and it spoke of bad ones. There were holes in the "three-ply" carpet that might have been mended.

There were slits in the haircloth sofa that a woman could have drawn together and darned. Cobwebs stretched across the windows, showing that they were never opened; and, as the women sat down, the close, mouldy atmosphere made Mrs. Rodman cough.

As long as Hannah could remember, her mother had had this hacking cough. It sounded sepulchrally through the forlorn house sometimes when she was busy about her work.

"Well," said Mrs. Rodman, bitterly, "I knew it had to come."

"I am glad it has." Hannah's voice was serene and brave.

"You'll be of no consequence after this. When a woman goes out to day's work, she loses her place. I was determined, though, that they shouldn't make a difference at Colonel Boudinot's. I don't believe you will have to stay more than three days to make that frock."

"Mother, I have reached the point where I'd be glad to stay there or anywhere a month for the sake of giving you a little ready money. And, really, I don't mind — any more. Oh," — and Hannah's voice broke with sudden passion, — "if Sylvester only had a little ambition and if father hadn't gone to war, how different it would have been!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Rodman, "we'd stand side by side with the Manners then. But there is no use in talking. Sylvester wasn't born to farm. I don't know what he was born for, I'm sure." Her voice died away in despondency. "I'm afraid he is keeping bad company, — off nights, and sleeping half the day! and the farm going to rack and ruin. Oh, dear!"

The widow's aspect was more forlorn than her exclamation.

"This won't do!" said Hannah, with sudden energy. "This room always gives us the blues. I don't know why we ever come here. I never do, from one week's end to the other, except to talk things over with you. It is a dark, gloomy place. Come, mother, come!" And, seizing Mrs. Rodman's apathetic hand, she led the way into the living-room, where order, cleanliness, and sunshine reigned.

Hannah began to iron while her mother prepared dinner, and their duties restored a kind of cheerfulness. If hope were not the girl's chief characteristic, a brave, industrious energy was its substitute.

Meanwhile, Cornelia having confided to her mother her perplexity over Virginia's discontent, Mrs. Boudinot proposed to invite the young girls to spend a fortnight at the "mansion." She said that she had long wanted to have Mary Livingston and Catherine Schuyler make her a visit, but had hesitated to invite them because she had forgotten how to entertain young people. But with Virginia and Patty there, and all in the family, too, the entertainment would take care of itself. Cornelia could quiet Mr. Manners' opposition by assuring him that she and John would continue to sleep at the farmstead, and that the visit under no circumstances should extend beyond the time indicated.

Thus, in the brief period while Colonel Boudinot was ambling towards home, and full of innocent cheerfulness over the provision for his wife's dressmaking, and his interest, he had also succeeded in creating a situation that promised to be irritating.

Mrs. Boudinot, excited over the novelty of the affair, hastened to despatch a boy on horseback with the notes of invitation; and just after the colonel disappeared down the Rodman lane the messenger galloped past towards Mulholland.

About noon the colonel reached home, with his most complacent expression, and, looking down at his wife benevolently, said: "I have brought about a surprising state of affairs. You know how obstinate Hannah Rodman has been about going from home to sew. Well! she is coming here to-morrow to begin your brown silk dress."

"Father!" exclaimed Cornelia, in dismay.

"What's the matter? I should think you would be delighted. Isn't it astonishing, Mrs. Boudinot, to think of Hannah's going out to sew?" said the colonel.

"Very," replied Mrs. Boudinot, absent-mindedly.

The Rodmans with their pride and independence rose before her. Cornelia seemed to see Hannah's nervous, serious, grey eyes provoking sparks from Virginia's black ones.

"Of course, I had to promise that Hannah should come as company and all that sort of thing; and she ought to," added the colonel, valiantly. "Why, when I was a young buck, her father led us all. If he'd stayed at home and minded his business instead of getting killed at Buena Vista, Hannah would be holding her own with the other girls. It made me feel kind of bad to see her carry a pail of water heavy enough to break her back. What a back she has, though! As straight as an Indian's. Mrs. Rodman is going down hill fast. She looks like a tree sapped with borers. I knew you would feel glad to have your dress made up, Mrs. Boudinot. I've had it in mind," he added reluctantly, like a man who prefers to hold an important fact in reserve, "to take you to Washington before long; and there is nothing like being in readiness."

"I am sure Hannah will make the dress beautifully, dear." Mrs. Boudinot looked at her husband with indulgent tenderness. "It is Hannah's coming just now that troubles Cornelia and me. We invited two of the Mulholland girls down here for a fortnight this morning. Virginia and Patty are coming, too. They are all to come to-morrow afternoon." She looked scared in spite of herself at the thought of managing for guests without his suggestion or consent.

"Why didn't you consult me first? It will be your own fault if there are complications."

"Couldn't we defer the dressmaking, Alexander?"

"Then we couldn't get Hannah here to sew," he replied with manlike naiveté.

"Why not?" inquired Cornelia.

"Because she is coming on account of the interest.

If we put her off, they will change their minds and find some other way to pay it."

"You took advantage of her, father!" Cornelia looked indignant.

"No such thing! It is a mutual compromise. The interest was due ten days ago. I'll look out for Hannah. She is as good as the best of us."

"Yes — but, father, we can't force our social convictions on others. It will be sure to vex Virginia. We can manage Patty, no doubt. Patty has more true pride in her little finger than Virginia has in her whole body," continued Cornelia, reflectively.

"But what an eye the older sister has!" said the colonel. "There is a devil in her of the most ravishing kind. I tell you, Cornelia, it is with a woman as it is with a horse. Notice the foot and examine the eye."

"Where are you going to put them all, Mrs. Boudinot?" He insisted on going upstairs to help select the chambers with the cheerful alacrity of a hotel proprietor.

The day had grown hot; and, when Mrs. Manners, on reaching the farm-house again, walked through the long, low hall, she fanned herself as she went. Upstairs she could hear the sisters' voices; following the sound, she found herself on the threshold of an interior shocking to her orderly ways.

Virginia lay on the bed in a loose wrapper with flowing sleeves, her arms above her head, her dusky hair framing her indolent, smiling face. Patty sat on a stool, her white dimpled shoulder catching a stray sunbeam, the turn of her wrist, the moulding of her hand, a study for a painter as she plied her crochet needle. And everywhere else in the room confusion prevailed.

A line strung cat-a-corner between a window and a

nail in the wall sagged with garments thrown across it pell-mell. Shoes stood as they had fallen, a pile of unmated ones in one spot, a slipper and a boot with heels together in another. Curl-papers and jewellery littered the bureau. The drapery of the windows was wrinkled and caught back at all sorts of angles. Various perfumes contended for supremacy, while each piece of furniture was outlined by the dust underneath. A trunk, with the lid raised, revealed a churned mass of furbelows.

In the midst of the dust and disorder the sisters reigned, dominating it by a beauty that bloomed upon their aunt, and held her wondering and admiring, notwithstanding her own exquisite neatness and daintiness.

"I am sure yo're disgusted, Aunt Cornelius; and I should think you would be. But what can we do? I've forbidden either Betsy or Judy to sweep here, or touch a single thing. They are both so clumsy about a lady's room. You mustn't be afraid of the dust: it's settled, most of the time. Things are tossed about because Patty and I go to bed in the dark, on account of the mosquitoes. And then, besides," Virginia laughed lazily, "as long as we haven't a maid, we like to keep things handy."

"I shouldn't think you could ever find what you want."

"We could lay our hands on them in the dark," said Patty, serenely. "Do come in, auntie." And, picking up a gown lying in a heap in a rocking-chair, she threw it in a corner, and lovingly drew the chair forward.

Mrs. Manners sat down, and fanned silently; while Virginia, flinging her hair up over the pillow, beamed such a welcoming smile that her aunt shut her conscience, if not her eyes, to the jumble of clothing on every side.

"How would you like to spend a fortnight at mother's?"

Virginia sat bolt upright. "When?"

"Now."

"Goodness gracious, Aunt Cornelia, I think Mrs. Boudinot is lovely!" She was all animation over the plan which Mrs. Manners projected.

"What will poor grandpa do, auntie?" inquired Patty, solicitously.

Mrs. Manners glanced at her with the forecasting eye of maturity, pleased with her sympathy. "We have made a nice plan for him, too. He will take supper at home with us every day, and he and I and John will come back here to spend the nights."

## XI.

LATE on the following afternoon, while Hannah was sewing by a front window in Mrs. Boudinot's chamber, the crunching of wheels on the gravel made her look out.

A carriage, with the top down, was emerging from the hemlocks; and she watched it with the eagerness of a passionate heart that must take a losing part in the pleasures of life. The occupants were talking and laughing, and over the sides the full white skirts of the girls seemed to spill in their effort to make space for the young man who sat between them. It was Catherine Schuyler with Frank Livingston and his sister Mary. At the same instant Virginia and Patty advanced from the grove. Bending forward, Hannah saw that Mrs. Boudinot and Mrs. Manners were waiting to welcome their guests.

As family fortunes darkened, Hannah had withdrawn from her companions; and, too, it had been easy for them to help her in this retreat of inexperience before difficulties. The sight of the girls, of Frank, made her heart beat violently. Her hands trembled over her sewing when she heard the young people come upstairs.

The lazy, musical roll of Virginia's speech affected her. There was authority underlaid with sweetness in that voice. Hannah instinctively knew its meaning. It was Virginia she seemed to see when she should go downstairs at supper time.

Presently Mrs. Boudinot came in.

"Now, my dear, go to your room, and rest a little before you change your frock. I hope you brought a white dress with you. All the other girls have white dresses on. They look like a bunch of roses, sitting on the piazza. You know Timothy Steevens, don't

you? He and Thomas Robotham are going to drive over from Mulholland this evening. Make the most of that pretty hair." And, to Hannah's surprise, Mrs. Boudinot kissed her as she was leaving the room.

As the door closed, the older woman sighed with that motherly sympathy which is nearest the divine. She had planned to have Hannah serve the fruit at supper, so as to give the young girl the appearance of being one of them in reality; and she was to sit between Patty and Mary, who would be sure to talk with her a little. Mrs. Boudinot had already perceived that Hannah's power to converse depended absolutely on her feeling at the time, that hers was a tongue loosed or hindered by personal atmosphere.

The supper-bell sounded on the stairs; and, summoning her courage, Hannah started down. She wore a white dress, it is true; but her shoes were not only old, but they squeaked. She was not vain, but her disadvantages made her self-conscious. Her deep-set eyes shone with suppressed apprehension as she walked through the hall to where everybody else had gathered, even old Mr. Manners.

Cornelia stepped forward, took her hand, and, gracefully and parenthetically reminding the Mulholland girls that they had all been little children together, formally introduced her to Virginia and Patty as the daughter of the late Captain Rodman who had fallen in the battle of Buena Vista.

Virginia was delighted to meet anybody with military antecedents, however remote; and, to Mrs. Boudinot's relief, she put her hand in Hannah's arm, and they walked together to the dining-room.

"It is such a pleasure to meet you, Miss Rodman. You're the first No'thern girl I have seen who looks like a Southerner." The flattery in her tones was naive. "The girls up here are so cold. I reckon

yo're not from Mulholland, or I should have met you before."

"I'm from the neighbourhood," said Hannah, basking in Virginia's cordiality, and recoiling from it at the same time. But they were already in the dining-room, and the bustle preliminary to being seated followed.

From the opposite side of the table, Virginia kept looking at Hannah flatteringly, as if she were a brand-new acquisition. Mr. Manners and the colonel, too, talked to her with a kind of protecting gentleness, which effectually convinced Virginia of Captain Rodman's value in the community. She could hardly wait till tea was over to monopolise her new friend; but, notwithstanding, she found leisure and opportunity to interrupt a cosey talk between Catherine and Frank, and bantered with the colonel throughout the meal. She studied every claim to beauty Hannah had or did not have, and, as they came together on the piazza, said: "My heart warms to you, Miss Rodman. I never expected, I am sure, to entertain such a feeling towards a No'thern girl. Are any of your people in the war?"

Hannah looked stern. "If I had been a man, I would have gone with the first volunteers."

"Don't let us talk of the war," said Virginia, uneasily. "I don't want to know whether you agree with me or not. I don't want to hate you! I don't mind hating some people. It is as good as loving—in a way. O-oh, you dear thing!" And she seized Hannah's hand as they turned the corner of the lofty piazza and went out of sight of the others. "There,—h'm,—you seem like a peach!" releasing Hannah's face from between her hands, after kissing her vehemently two or three times. "Let us sit here." And she sank down on a flight of steps leading to the drive

encircling the mansion. "Now tell me all about yourself,—everything! For you and I are to be friends."

Hannah breathed quickly. She felt choking in a sea of happiness—and dread. She had dreamed of such warmth with some girl friend. She had never had it. The memory of kisses that had been hers—kisses of which no one in the world besides herself and he who had given them knew—swept over her, and made her feel both the sweetness and the difference of this girlish outburst of affectionate enthusiasm. She seized Virginia's hand with sudden passion. "Don't—don't, when I tell you"—

"What is it?" Virginia drew herself up. Hannah for the moment had the look of one in disgrace.

The surprise in Virginia's face hardened Hannah; and, sitting erect and proud and looking straight ahead, she said steadily, "I sew for a living."

"Well, what of it?" exclaimed Virginia. "You are Captain Rodman's daughter, aren't you? You wouldn't have sewed, would you, if he hadn't fallen at Buena Vista?"

"I suppose not," replied Hannah, flushing with innocent pride in the protection of a father's name.

"You are a martyr to the cause of your country, wicked as part of it is," added Virginia, doggedly, "in fighting our poor So'th. I suppose, of co'se, your father left a lot of debts: most military men do. They can't be bothered with money matters when they are the defenders of their families. And things ran from bad to worse, didn't they, after he was gone—and all that sort of thing? Is that it?"

Hannah looked at her with keen, dry eyes full of passionate admiration, nodding assent as Virginia continued. "It has almost killed mother," she said after a pause, which Virginia filled with caressing

pats. "If we hadn't braced ourselves all the time, we would have been like a stone rolling down a steep hill. It has made mother bitter. And I have stayed by myself more and more. Don't tell,"—and she strained towards Virginia with a final outburst of girlish confidence,—"I am sewing out some interest. It is the first time I have sewed away from home, and I didn't know till I got here that there was to be company. Mother wouldn't let me come till Colonel Boudinot promised I should be one of the family."

"I should think so!" exclaimed Virginia. "Have any of the Mulholland girls snubbed you,—snubbed a dead soldier's daughter for being poor? Not Miss Schuyler and Mary Livingston, surely. They are ladies."

"No, I assure you they haven't," said Hannah, "although I haven't let myself go lately where any of the girls could snub me. I haven't had things to wear, and"—with the illumination Virginia's sympathy was throwing on the whole situation—"I suppose my loneliness is partly my own fault."

"There are going to be lots of poor people in the So' th after the war," said Virginia, thoughtfully. "We're all right, of co'se. We own so much land. Why, some of our first families are wearing duds,—perfect duds; and they glory in it! I'd like to see anybody snub an old Virginia family if they wore calico and lived on hoe-cakes! They would get the worst of it. I should think it would be the same in New Jersey. The Manners are a mighty old New Jersey family, and I suppose it's the same with the Rodmans."

"Oh, they're old enough. But the Rodmans have nearly all died out. We're the last, Sylvester and I."

"Who's Sylvester?" said Virginia, eagerly.

"Sylvester is my brother."

"You haven't anything to worry about, if you have a brother. I suppose he is a little fellow, though."

Hannah smiled. "He is six feet tall."

"Is he coming over this evening?" inquired Virginia.

Hannah shook her head. "I'll tell you about Sylvester another time."

"Give me one more kiss, and don't mind because you have to sew. It must be dreadful, of co'se, when a lazy fit takes you. I shall describe you in my letters to my So'thern friends as Hannah, the martyr soldier's daughter. I must go look up Mr. Livingston. There isn't any chance, here in the No'th, for flirtations. I don't care a picayune for Mary's brother, only he is better than nothing; and Catherine Schuyler aggravates me. Patty has a fine skin,—she is as white as milk, too; but she has a snapping eye. Catherine's eye is like water in a summer sun. It gets light and glows. Are you going to stay all night? How nice! We're coming," as Mrs. Manners called to them from the parlour window.

The young people grouped themselves in the cool corner of the great piazza. What did they talk about? What do young people talk about? The farther the years advance, the greater grows the mystery. They laugh,—they laugh a great deal. And the memory of tender voices blended with frolic, the recollection of eyes with trust underneath the mirth, the memory of youthful faces with which none since could compare,—these remain in old hearts, and temper the judgment in old faces when the fun grows hilarious and the chatter seems endless.

It was later than usual when Colonel Boudinot and Mr. Manners sauntered towards the picket fence. Meanwhile Cornelia walked home with John, who was tired and wanted to go to bed. She lingered with her son on the porch to listen to the trill of the frogs in the great meadows and to talk about heaven, for John's

curiosity concerning the unseen was perpetual. But this night he was not as absorbed as usual in her pious fancies.

"Where is the Souf, mamma?" he interrupted.

She pointed over the pines, dark in the rapidly fading light; and again John raised his finger, and his vision followed after, his tender expression betraying the intensity with which his childish imagination was projecting his absent father. Fumbling in his blouse, he drew forth Colonel Manners's letter, already ragged. "Read it again, mamma."

She waited till he was undressed and had said his prayers. He looked very thoughtful and wise and affectionate as she read:—

"*'My dear Boy,—I have just finished my supper of beans, hardtack, and coffee. It tasted first-rate. Now I am going to turn in'*"—

"What does that mean, mamma?"

"Go to bed."

John nodded.

"Now I am going to turn in till four o'clock to-morrow morning, and then we are going to march, thousands upon thousands of us, south to Richmond."

John raised his finger with a gleam of serious intelligence, and pinned the South with it over the meadow.

"And we are going to take Richmond, my boy. Don't forget that!"

"Will papa come home when they take Richmond?"

"Oh, yes, indeed." His mother wiped her eyes.

"Be a good boy. Kiss your precious mamma for me,"—

John threw his arms around her neck, hugging and kissing her many times.

"And don't forget to be kind to your grandfather.

"PAPA."

Cornelia slowly folded the letter.

"Is that all?" asked John, soberly. He took the letter, and, holding it with tender wistfulness, said, "I want to take it to bed with me."

His mother pinned it to his night-gown right over his heart, explaining why she put it there; and John looked satisfied. "I want to turn in now," he said, and straightened like a soldier.

In a few minutes he was asleep, his hand resting on the precious letter; and his mother returned to the company. As she approached the house, she heard a hub-bub of frolic, and saw four single carriages before the piazza. The tops were down, and the horses gay with white fringed netting. The young men from Mulholland had arrived, each with his own vehicle; and, as the night was warm and the moon full, the Livingstons had proposed a drive in the pines. Colonel Boudinot had gallantly offered his trap, and in a few minutes all were ready for the start.

Now Patty's Virginia code concerning "buggy-riding" was strict. She might, indeed, drive in such a vehicle, but not with a young man. Already ingenious in evading differences of opinion, she chose Hannah for her companion; and, as both girls were safe horse-women, they were soon disposed of in the colonel's carriage.

Virginia had cast a brief, regretful look towards Hannah, but the complimentary opportunity was too tempting. No "buggy-riding" compunctions troubled her. New Jersey conventionalities sufficed her so long as nothing patriotic was involved.

"Mary," she whispered, rolling her black eyes lovingly towards the one girl with a brother, "ask Frank to take me."

And Frank, at a period in his experience with women when sentiment and sentimentality were striving with

each other, and feeling so sure that Catherine had those staying qualities which would keep her forever waiting and always loyal, wanted what Virginia wanted. Catherine saw it, and turned towards little Timothy.

Timothy never would have presumed to ask her to drive with him without this encouragement. He held Catherine in a kind of religious awe. If he had dared, he would have loved her; but his humility, like that of many another humble-minded man, saved him from the misery of a hopeless passion. The pride that every one felt Catherine possessed, but seldom saw manifested, was intense. She understood the little man, even while apparently forgetting herself; and simply because he was everybody's friend, or, rather, because his personality was of the unaggressive kind that made everybody his friend, she was willing to drive with the schoolmaster. So Timothy and Catherine took the second carriage.

Now Mary felt a great repulsion for Thomas Rotherham, although her intentions towards him were perfect so long as he kept at a distance. Something in the delicacy of her physique rebelled against such a fat young man. But, as there was no alternative, she accepted his escort; and thus Virginia with Frank brought up the rear.

As the line of carriages started down the slope under the oaks, the colonel and Mr. Manners stood between the tall, square pillars of the porch, and watched them disappear in the darkness of the hemlocks.

"Well," said Colonel Boudinot, complacently, "like father, like son. It's the South that won."

"What do you mean?" inquired his companion.

"I mean just that. Only your grand-daughters were mated for this drive according to their wishes. I tell you there is nothing to equal Southern ability. It's so darned good-natured and thorough-going and selfish.

It's bound to get what it wants before a sluggish Northerner has time to think. I declare, I admire the South. I admire success. Look at the South in the Presidential chair from 1789 till 1850. Southern Presidents held the executive office for forty-nine years and three months against twelve years and one month by the North. And from 1850 till Lincoln's election the South, or its Northern sympathisers, sat in the President's chair. Of course, they were not going to stand it when the North interfered by Lincoln's election. How could they stand it, sir? See how long they ruled Congress. Consider the Nullification Act, the Fugitive Slave Law, and the other provisions of the Omnibus Bill."

"What about the Act of Emancipation?" exclaimed Mr. Manners, fiercely.

"We'll see about emancipation when Lee beats Grant. When the South gets ready, it will whip the darkies back to bondage."

"Oh, see here, Colonel Boudinot," said Mr. Manners, impatiently, "you're too hot a fire-eater. You're a worse Southerner than a South Carolinian. I confess to a little pity for the South. They were born to all that sort of thing. It's in their blood. But for you,—who have lived here all your life and should appreciate what free labour and hard work mean for the majority of men,—yes, sir,—and what Northern morals are compared with that nasty mulatto evidence down there—you make me mad! You know better, Colonel Boudinot. You know you know better."

The colonel spread his feet apart, and puffed silently. "Well," he said at length, "I'm a peace Democrat. I believe in letting everybody have his own way. If the South wanted to secede, we had no business to stop them."

"Yes, we had, too! The biggest and the cleanest

conscience must always do its work. I have no fault to find with State rights on paper; but they are not all the rights in the world, sir. It is time the South came to an end as the South, and the North as the North. Abra'm Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant are going to accomplish that very thing. We are going to be a country. We are going to have a Union." The aged patriot trembled with excitement.

The colonel whistled. He felt alarmed to see Mr. Manners so agitated, for Cornelia had confided to him only that day that her father-in-law had a serious heart weakness. "Time alone can tell which of us is right," he said, with a tremendous effort at magnanimity. "And, speaking of your grand-daughters, I declare I've got curiosity enough to wish I could watch Virginia angle with young Livingston down in the pines in the moonlight. Well, well, they will be young only once in their lives."

"Patty is a girl with good common sense," said Mr. Manners. "There isn't any nonsense about her. She wouldn't drive in a carriage alone with a young man. She wasn't brought up that way; and I'm glad she wasn't."

"There is a little good in the South, eh?" the colonel couldn't refrain from saying.

"However, colonel," ignoring the question, "you and I did our share of that sort of thing when we were young."

"That's so," assented the colonel.

Like the aged watchers on the walls of Troy, the old men sighed, looked through the trees at the moon sailing in pale splendour among the fluffy clouds and shamming the proud, cold, distant stars with its nearer light and companionship, and then they looked at each other and smiled in a friendly, knowing manner.

"I hope they will have a good time," said the colonel;

"and I shan't hear them if they come back at two o'clock in the morning."

"I've crept up to bed many a time at break of day in my stocking feet," said Mr. Manners, "when a lot of us went off like that for a drive, when we were all young."

"It sometimes seems as though it had never been, doesn't it?" said the colonel.

"And then, again," said Mr. Manners, "when I see a pretty woman, it gives me the feeling of youth for a second. But it is only a flash in the pan. It doesn't last."

"No, it doesn't last," reiterated the colonel, mournfully.

Hannah sat in silent wonder beside Patty, watching the skill with which she drove, and aware of a style not usual in her own neighbourhood with women who handled the reins. Hannah herself had been accustomed to quicken a horse with a flip of the lines and a "click, click." It was what she had always seen and unconsciously imitated. On a horse's back she was another creature. There she had her own method, to be sure; but it meant a firm seat and swift motion. She was older than Patty, and with a brave independence bred of misfortune. But now, in a situation which her wildest fancy could not have projected the day before, she felt a gentle dependence, born of her ignorance of what was socially required of her.

Patty, on her part, was only conscious of a fine, strong presence to which, like Virginia, she felt sympathetic. Before she was aware, she was pouring out her homesickness with a girl's confidence in another girl.

Hannah noticed how thin she was; and, in the moonlight, the gleam of her hair, the milky whiteness of her skin, and the liquid transparency of her eyes

suggested a delicacy which her management of the horses would not have indicated.

"You have a strong hand," she said admiringly, as Patty brought the team to a walk. "But you look so frail. You haven't a particle of colour, and you ate hardly any supper."

Patty turned in her seat, and regarded Hannah intently. "I'll tell you why," she said. "I haven't told any one else, not even Aunt Cornelia, although she has had her doctor visit me. I feel you will understand. I mean, I think you would do so, too, under similar circumstances. They are starving in the South!" whispered Patty. "In my own home, for months and months, we were without the usual luxuries of food. And so, Hannah, when I came up here and saw such abundance, I took a vow, because of the famishing South, to eat just as little as I could. Sometimes I have been very much tempted, but I have kept the vow; and lately I have seemed to have better thoughts and sweeter feelings towards everybody than I ever had before, and the temptation to gratify my appetite grows less. I seem to know more clearly that there is another life. I seem,—I am almost afraid to tell you,—I seem at times to know God. It is a strange, beautiful experience. When it comes, I don't feel homesick. It is a kind of a heavenly feeling, Hannah."

Hannah clasped Patty's hand.

They had driven slowly during this conversation, and the near sound of wheels now made them glance back.

Thomas Robotham and Mary were close behind; and, although Mary sat with a stiff reserve, Thomas looked very happy. Far ahead were Catherine and the schoolmaster; and dimly visible, a half-mile in the rear, were Frank and Virginia.

The moon rode high in the heavens with the round, staring countenance of bald old age. The grain-fields approaching ripeness scintillated like ponds of molten silver; over everything hung the vague, dewy haze of a hot summer night.

They reached the pines, still a vast forest stretching between the rich market-lands and the coast, and intersected by roads, with clearings here and there occupied by lumbermen or semi-nomadic coloured people. Drifts of sand gleamed beneath the sombre needles. Occasional beds of silvery moss carpeted the ground, and patches of underbrush sent forth the odorous breath of the huckleberry blossom.

The vehicles drew near together as the young people entered the forest. In the blue opening above the road the moon scudded from one drift of cloud to another, while cool draughts of air poured forth from leafy vaults and musical whispers stole from bough to bough. Nothing could have been more enchanting, more unusual, more alluring, than those vistas in the pines. The beauty of the night could not soothe Mary's irritation. She had not expected that Frank would consent to escort Virginia. The cherished wish of her heart was to see him Catherine's accepted lover. She understood the delicacy, fastidiousness, and sincerity of Catherine's nature,—the granite pride underlying that calm exterior. She knew her brother's solid worth, and, better than he did, the depth of his regard for Catherine. And here was Virginia slipping into the quiet order of their lives and tendencies, and with a glance of her eye and a tone of her voice undoing the gentle habit of a lifetime.

They had come to a natural opening in the woods where the soil was deep enough to nourish a growth of fine forest grass. The spot shone like a well of light amid the pines. Among the coloured people it was

invested with charm. Here the witches were said to dance, and here many a rendezvous between lovers had taken place. The young people alighted, and, moved by the associations of the place, danced in a ring. The girls had thrown off their hats; and, as the circle whirled and reversed, Hannah felt a wild sense of freedom. Her dark hair loosened and fell about her shoulders, her eyes shone with excitement. Patty began to chant in a high, clear monotone, "Who rides so late through night and wind?"

Round and round the circle whirled until the chain broke, when the dancers threw themselves breathless on the grass.

Mary sat beside her brother, and, bending towards him, whispered: "Frank, drive home with Catherine. I'll arrange it."

"No!" His eyes were riveted on Virginia, who looked like some brilliant flower of the night, its life the product of the moonlight and the forest. Everything about her seemed to glow, to unfold. He stared at the lustre of her eyes, at the full roundness of her bare shoulders, at the quiver in her throat as she panted for breath.

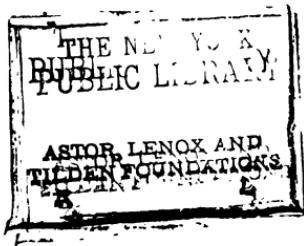
Catherine overheard, and turned whiter and looked colder than the wax flowers, burdening the air with luxurious sweetness.

"Sir Olaf, Sir Olaf, come, go with me!" Patty began to sing.

The barely perceptible thud of a horse's hoofs in the sandy road a few rods off became audible, and the next instant there was a rustle of low branches as if a horseman were trying to push through. Sylvester Rodman rode into the circle.

No one spoke. No one moved. It was as if Sir Olaf had obeyed the summons, and, according to the ancient German legend, ridden to his death.





The young man sat his horse firmly, and with a natural grace which threw into bold relief his great height and the beauty of a thick golden beard. His hat hung on the horn of the saddle, and his long hair was blown and disordered.

Patty had thrown herself back, each hand resting on the grass. Her eyes were expanded, her mouth was open in breathless expectation—of what she hardly knew. Her upturned face looked unnaturally beautiful; and, as Sylvester brought his horse to a sudden halt before the wonder of that vision as it appeared to him, the others in the circle as far as he was conscious of them melted away, disappeared.

To the young Southerner, Sylvester looked like a giant; and, if he had leaned over and caught her up and ridden off with her, it would not have surprised her.

"What do you want?" It was Hannah's voice, cold and restrained.

He glanced at her as though roused from a dream, a deep sigh, like that of a swimmer who has held his breath till it is likely to fail, escaping from him, and turning, he rode away.

"It is Sir Olaf," exclaimed Mary, breaking the silence. "If the old song is true, he has ridden to his death."

"It is my brother Sylvester," said Hannah, so prosaically that they all laughed. They began to walk under the trees near the circle, but the dance and Sylvester and the growing lateness of the hour had woven a spell. Virginia turned down a narrow path, and Frank followed. With her arm around Catherine, Mary sauntered after, but keeping her brother in sight.

A spirit of cruelty and defiance seized Virginia on perceiving herself watched. Mary had always seemed so pliant, so gentle. Half the secret of her charm for

Virginia had been her pliancy. If she chose to watch, she must take the consequences.

Catherine found herself in a position quickening her with a sense of shame and helplessness, for she had not at first perceived Mary's object. To Catherine, nobody in this world was of importance enough to watch. Moreover, she held her own reserves too sacred to let her take liberties with those of others. But in Mary's nature there was something temporarily pitiless and authoritative; and the thought occurred to her that, as it was with Virginia, so it was with the whole South. A Northern spirit, aggressive and persistent, animated her. Her brother should neither trifle nor be trifled with.

Virginia turned from time to time to walk a few steps with Frank, and then chased on ahead.

They were all getting deeper and deeper into the forest.

"Frank! Virginia!" cried Mary, imperiously. "We must go home. Come!"

Virginia leaned against an oak whose vast circumference of foliage had made an oasis in the piney growth. The moonbeams sifted over her white dress, shone upon her beautiful shoulders, and illuminated her face, suffused with pride and softness. It was a still moment, charged with the force of contending wills.

Virginia continued motionless, her white arm clasping the great tree, her head nestling against it, her liquid, languishing eyes fixed on Frank.

Catherine turned away; but Mary stood rigid, reproachful.

Virginia clung to the tree as if it were her defence from those two girls of paler beauty and sterner mould.

Suddenly Frank rushed towards her, and kissed her.

She relaxed her clasp as if astonished, and, darting under the trees, ran till she reached the circle. When

the others came into the opening, she seized Mary's hand, and, panting and apologetic, whispered, "Tell me, Mary, ought I to feel angry with your brother?"

"You—angry!" exclaimed Mary. "That is not the question. Frank will be so angry with himself tomorrow that he will wish he had never seen you. You had no right to do that, Virginia,—no right; and I think less of you!"

"I—did nothing," replied Virginia. "But here is your brother. I will appeal to him. I cannot drive home with you, Mr. Livingston, unless you apologise, and before your sister and Miss Schuyler."

"I apologise, certainly," he said mechanically. His voice was cold. He looked as if he had been struck; and his eyes were fixed on Catherine, and not on Virginia. Catherine stood with a gathering haughty distress in her expression.

"Catherine," repeated Frank, still regarding her, "I apologise."

Virginia, vouchsafing him one glance of supreme contempt and swelling indignation, walked away with skimming swiftness. "Mr. Robotham," she said, panting slightly as she came up with him, and otherwise much agitated, "I am to drive home with you, and Miss Livingston with her brother. If your carriage is at hand, I would like to get right in and start on."

Her manner was so impressive that Thomas immediately untied his horse. Before the others fairly grasped the situation, Virginia was leaning forward from the seat with a smiling, unruffled countenance, bidding Patty hasten after.

Catherine felt the comfort the schoolmaster's presence always afforded under awkward circumstances.

"I am very tired, Mr. Steevens," she said with a gentleness that made his unselfish, worshipping heart leap. "I would like to go just as soon as possible."

When Frank and Mary started, the others were far ahead, and between the brother and sister there settled that uncomfortable silence following a family jar. Mary's brothers were not merely systematically, but spontaneously chivalrous towards her; and rare were the occasions when she was not more busy in picking the beam out of her own eyes than the mote from theirs. Between Frank and her an unspoken compact concerning Catherine had existed, and he now felt a mortifying consciousness of his sister's rectitude compared with his own. Moreover, one of those swift, subtle reactions had taken place in him, often as permanent as sudden. As he had drawn away from Virginia, he had caught the mockery in her eyes, and felt repulsed by the perception that impulse had swayed him and deliberation her. His vanity insisted that Catherine never could have acted thus, which was perfectly true; but neither could she have understood the temptation which assailed him.

Whatever Virginia's faults, she had a large tolerance for everything masking under the name of love; and, although her tolerance was, doubtless, in its essence kindred to the easy-going generosity on which many men plume themselves in comparison with women, it made it possible for Frank to repair what he foresaw to be only an imaginary breach with her. But with Catherine it would be otherwise. He realised how cruelly he had hurt her, and his love for her was stirred to the depths. The quiet though profound regard he had hitherto cherished for her, the slowly accumulating love of a lifetime, flamed into active being; and, as he sat beside Mary in silence, he felt he had disgraced himself before a peerless woman.

"How shall I ever make it up with Catherine, Mary?" he asked huskily, as they reached the hemlock avenue.

"Are you in earnest, Frank? Do you want to make it up?"

"How can you ask such a question? There isn't another woman like Catherine in the world."

"The beauty of a nature like Catherine's, Frank, is its constancy. She may mean to throw you overboard, and I couldn't blame her," Mary added with attempted severity, "if she did. But she would find she couldn't."

Frank put his arm around his sister.

"We are all going to prayer-meeting at the school-house to-morrow night," suggested Mary.

"What good will that do me?"

"Drive down from the village, and ask Catherine after the meeting to let you take her home."

"And what if she refused me before everybody?"

"Well, what if she did?" exclaimed Mary. "Wouldn't it serve you right?"

"Try to let her know, will you, Mary dear, how mean and sorry I feel?"

Mary squeezed his big, muscular hand between both of hers.

"I'll be at the meeting," he whispered, while helping her to alight.

On reaching home, determined to accomplish a disagreeable duty as quickly as possible, and with fond anticipations of a personal reconciliation with Catherine, Frank wrote to Virginia, and went out before breakfast to mail his very direct and formal apology. Virginia, unfortunately, received it while sitting under the trees with the others, sewing. On the face of things, since Catherine had received no letter, this solicitude concerning Virginia seemed an additional slight. With a triumphant impulse, Virginia read the letter aloud.

"Of course," said Mary, "since Frank was so fool-

ish, there was nothing else for him to do, poor fellow."

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed Patty. "Poor Virginia! I think it is dreadful to take sides against your own sex. You see how freely Mr. Livingston vindicates sister."

"He had to," said Mary, haughtily. "That is why it is so hard for a man."

"Who compelled him?" cried Virginia. "Certainly, not I. I shall overlook it, of co'se. It was a trivial matter, anyway,—due to the moonlight, I suppose. I hope you won't let your brother come between us, Mary."

"I stand by Frank, Virginia."

"All the more reason why I must forgive him," said Virginia, with a radiant smile. "Dear me! what is a kiss, more or less?"

Catherine turned white.

"I'll promise you one thing, Mary," continued Virginia, with emphasis. "I promise you that if another Northern man tries to kiss me, I will slap him in the face. I declare I will."

Mary laughed as if perceiving the hopelessness of the argument, and presently apparent harmony prevailed. Patty, however, aware that Catherine entertained a light regard of Virginia's reserve and delicacy, became depressed, and stole away to find Hannah.

Hannah, meanwhile, sewed steadily all day. The sleepy stupor of the morning had yielded to a wide-awake elation. If she could have forgotten her lonely, discouraged mother, she would have felt sorry that another day would see Mrs. Boudinot's gown completed. But then, too, on the following afternoon the semi-weekly mail was due at the cross-roads; and, if the gown were finished, she could stop on her way home and inquire for letters.

She had been looking for a particular letter for a month. The thought of it, as well as the fear that Sylvester might get it before she could and her secret be discovered, made her fingers fly. For weeks her devices had been various by which she, instead of her brother, had gone for the mail; and this could not continue much longer.

While sewing for Mrs. Boudinot, anxieties and uncertainties which had grown gigantic lessened. Her conscience justified her secret engagement because of the necessities of her situation.

Hannah's lover was in the Army of the Potomac, and she had heard from him last just as that vast body was mobilising for its final forward march.

The battle of the Wilderness and the battle of Spottsylvania had been fought. The assault on Cold Harbor had been made and repulsed; but the North Anna, the Pamunky, and the Chickahominy had been crossed. From the bluffs on the north bank, Grant had watched his army cross on the great pontoon bridge to the south of the James, and had made City Point his headquarters. General Butler, in his bottle at Bermuda Hundred, commanded its rear approach, and was in a situation to harry Richmond. General Smith had made his inadequate first assault on Petersburg.

In that June of 1864, while Hannah sat sewing, the various divisions of the vast army rayed out to the east and south-west of Richmond like the spokes of a gigantic wheel, the partial circumference of which was the Union naval force along the coast and embracing the mouth of the James. The days were passing, and the wheel was laboriously completing its half-circle towards the south and south-west.

Inside the invested city and its outpost, Petersburg, the valour, the strength, the flower, of the Confederacy, were concentrated.

The North, aflame with hope, was renewing its resources.

All this Hannah knew. She had heard Mr. Manners and Colonel Boudinot rehearse the entire situation,—the repulses, the advances, the number of soldiers on each side, the bloody battles, and the bravery of both armies. But where was her lover? Was he dead or wounded or missing or forgetful of her or ill and unable to write—or—or—? She asked herself these questions over and over; and her anxiety, added to the solemnities of her narrow, arduous life, had inspired much of the nervous energy which kept her working from morning till night. Her lover and her mother! These were Hannah's watchwords, her two incentives.

In them she literally lived and moved and had her being.

## XII.

THE day after the moonlight ride had been a warm one; and, as the sun swam in hazy, golden splendour on the rim of western field and forest, Hannah folded her work with a sigh of fatigue and satisfaction, and got ready for tea and the walk to the school-house, where, in accordance with time-honoured custom, the weekly prayer-meeting would be held at "early candle-light."

When the party of girls set out, it would have required no stretch of the imagination to conceive of them as five of the virgins in the parable. Each, according to the primitive custom of the community for lighting the school-house, carried a lamp or candle. From time to time they met other groups similarly equipped, and the motley throng aroused in Patty a symbolical train of thought.

A narrow lane bordered with juniper-trees led to the school-house, an unpainted structure with wooden blinds, its floor worn by the tramp of many feet, some of which were silent now in the tide-water country of Virginia or sore with marching towards Richmond or through the cotton belt. Unpainted desks with surfaces slippery from the elbows of two generations lined the sides. Behind the desks were rude benches, and in front of them lower ones for the little children. An old stove, with draughts which time and rough usage had increased, stood in the middle of the floor, its rust-eaten pipe zigzagging towards the peak in the roof. Blackboards and maps lined the walls back of the desk where a long procession of tired souls had masked their fatigue under pedagogic cheerfulness. The humblest kind of an interior; but it had sheltered embryo judges and statesmen, farmers and ministers, the sweethearts and wives of soldiers who were serving

their country, and scores of soldiers who, according to their light, were battling with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Custom required the men to sit on one side at prayer-meeting and the women on the other. It was a pleasant sight to observe one aged countenance after another take on the ruddy glow of a fall pippin as the candles responded to the match, or watch the colour and softness of a young face bloom forth in the growing illumination.

Every other week Mr. Manners, as the representative Baptist in the community, conducted the meeting; while Major Finney, a Methodist exhorter, was his alternate.

But this week both leaders were present; and Colonel Boudinot was there, also, to start the singing. The colonel carried a tuning-fork in the pocket of his white duck waistcoat, and, after the opening prayer by Mr. Manners, snapped the fork between his teeth, held it to his ear, and murmured, "Do — me — sol — fa — do." The tune pitched, he waved his arms like a conductor signalling a train to start; and the congregation burst into an uproar of sound.

Mr. Manners, meanwhile, stood behind him, a grave, unmoved observer. Goodness and sobriety were stamped upon his aged face, rendered more patriarchal by the fringe of beard underneath his strong, square chin. Near him towered the exhorter, a tall, florid, impassioned Celt.

The singing completed, Major Finney soon held his audience spell-bound as he varied anecdote with Scripture quotation, warnings of judgment with promises of love and mercy. Hannah's cousin, Ruth Hallowell, quivered under his eloquence; and the exhorter, noticing her emotion, said with great solemnity, "Sister Hallowell, pray with us."

Ruth slowly shook her flower-like head, trying, although in vain, to ejaculate a refusal.

While Major Finney stood regarding her startled modesty reproachfully, the profound silence was broken by a kindly, musical voice. It was Virginia's.

"Don't you see, sir, that she is frightened to death, pore little thing! She has lost her voice."

Ruth, as if awaking from a hypnotic condition, rolled a glance of adoring gratitude towards Virginia, who smiled at her reassuringly, and then addressed Major Finney again:—

"If you would like to have another petition, sir, I have no objections to repeating the prayer of Saint Chrysostom." And, before her grandfather could grasp the situation, she was kneeling at one of the rude desks, her hands clasped, her face uplifted, and in a low, reverent voice reciting the familiar supplication. The concluding "Amen," pronounced broadly and with a rising inflection, still further astonished the conservative company of country worshippers.

Hardly had the sensation growing out of this unusual performance subsided, when there was a step in the open doorway. Sylvester Rodman entered, and took a seat on the men's side.

Hannah stared at her brother in astonishment; but he appeared unmindful of her presence, or, in fact, of any presence but that of Patty, who was an interested and not unmoved participant in the services. He had come in so quietly that Patty did not at once see him; and, when her glance finally met his accidentally, an expression of ingenuous admiration and surprise lighted up her beautiful features. Her eyes did not wander a second time, and yet she was like a flower under the awakening influence of summer. Impulses, a consciousness, an apprehension of forces not merely at-

tractive, but overwhelming, stirred her, whether she bowed her head in prayer or sang with the others,—

“ Let every thought and sense be sealed  
Against the world’s vain charm.”

And Frank was there, too. As Sylvester beheld only Patty, Frank thought chiefly of Catherine. Virginia’s dramatic performance had irritated him, while Catherine’s apparent indifference wrought him to a high pitch of misery.

The room grew hot and close, the kerosene lamps flared and smoked, the candles guttered and filled the air with a choking odour of tallow; but, finally, the meeting closed, and the small audience trooped forth under the hemlocks. There was much talking, a neighbourly exchange of news; and, when the group belonging to the Boudinot mansion separated from the others and started down the juniper lane, Frank joined Catherine.

“ May I take you home, Catherine? ”

For an instant she said nothing, an expression of offended dignity chiselling her features.

He felt a gulf yawning between them, for Mary had found an opportunity to whisper to him the effect of his note to Virginia. He wondered now that he could have committed such a blunder as to write to Virginia before conciliating Catherine. But he had seen the tender, religious responsiveness in her face during the meeting; and, surely, at such an hour, she could cherish only forgiveness.

As there are sacraments in religion, so to a nature like Catherine’s what was highest and sweetest in human nature was sacramental. She held as a matter of course the old-fashioned tolerance for the frailties of men. As Frank stood there before her, however, her theories did not serve her. He had trifled with

her, at least been capable of indifference towards her at a most critical moment; and, as he offered his company, she experienced a feeling of contempt for him.

He saw it in the backward turn of her shoulders, and felt it in an atmosphere enveloping her like frost. An overpowering sense of loss struck him.

"Forgive me, Catherine," he said passionately.

"You are not responsible to me, Mr. Livingston, for your conduct."

"Yes, I am; or, if I am not, I choose to be."

"It is not worth your while." A quiver of emotion ran through her. He saw it, and seized her hands.

"I am so sorry, Catherine."

"Let me go, please. I have no feeling towards you, at present — of any kind."

"Yes, you have. You are full of feeling,—pure, noble feeling. I will never shock it,—never hurt you again."

Catherine shook her head, not unkindly, but regrettfully, "as if something had gone out of their relation against her will. "I should never be sure of you, Frank,—never confident in — in my own power with you; and I couldn't stand that. I couldn't let myself sink into the petty misery of suspicion and all the small devices women have to resort to to hold men with fickle natures — or men who respect them more than they love them."

"But I love you, dear Catherine, as much as I respect you. I love you with all my heart."

She clasped her hands with that look of humble incredulity so pitiful in a proud face. "Go back to Mulholland, Frank. I can't let you drive me home to-night." And, turning away, she walked swiftly forward and joined Mrs. Manners.

Meanwhile Sylvester, to Hannah's amazement, attached himself to her. She was walking with Patty.

He did not dare walk beside Patty, even after Hannah had introduced them, although with some constraint; for her brother's careless dress shamed and angered her.

Sylvester had gone to the meeting with but one thought,—the hope of seeing the young Southerner again; and now, more to his own surprise even than Hannah's, he had followed on, charmed by the sound of Patty's voice, and full of a bewildered perception of a great disturbance in the dreamy monotony of his moods. He had the impressionable heart of the countryman and the instincts of the gentleman; but in his nature and environment, with respect to women, lurked the elements of tragedy. He could appreciate Patty's beauty, he had the analytic comprehension to read at once her strong, fine character; but he possessed no acquired capacity of mind or breeding to meet her reciprocally. The spontaneous admiration for beautiful gentlewomen and dissatisfaction with other women belonged to a nature like his, but with it existed profound ignorance of the causes and conditions producing such women.

Although Patty possessed a nature of delicate purity and sentiment, and a fineness in which Virginia did not share, and although she was high-spirited and ambitious, yet underneath all this there slept the feminine longing for the fierce, chivalrous love and pursuit of man. It was this kind of attraction she felt the possibility of, but did not recognise in Sylvester Rodman. She shrank from him, and at the same time enjoyed the worship of the young giant, who sometimes walked a little in advance of them and then fell behind.

In the flattering moonlight the slovenliness of his dress was less apparent, the remarkable beauty of his face and his tremendous personality more impressive.

The girls talked as if he were not in existence; but occasionally Patty encountered the stare of those wondering, worshipping, searching eyes.

When they reached the hemlocks, Hannah dismissed her brother, fearing lest Patty was being forced into company uncongenial and even repulsive. But, to her surprise, Patty extended her hand. "Good-night, Mr. Rodman. I hope I shall have the pleasure of meeting you again."

It was a simple, conventional remark; but it was weighted with tremendous significance to the young man as his strong, supple fingers closed over hers. He could do no more than look. He had no words,—only a great swell of hot, impetuous feeling that required a mightier effort from him than he had ever put forth in his life to loosen his clasp as she tried to withdraw her hand. And into that young sweet thing, half girl, half woman, he had seemed to pour all the unspent vitality of his twenty-two years,—essence of his brooding days upon the shore; of his midnight vigils among the pines; of his love of the heaving, majestic, passionate earth, whispering translations of her mysterious charms and voices to her chosen. From his strong brown hand the thrill of his unapplied strength stole through Patty, and left her silent, wondering, and tremulous as Hannah and she hurried up the drive to the house.

### XIII.

**B**Y noon of the following day the brown silk dress was completed; and after dinner the colonel took Hannah into his library and gave her a receipt in full for the interest, which was far beyond what she had earned. But he did it for a salve to his conscience. He had a protecting way with women that was charming, and Hannah felt genuinely glad that she had come. But she also felt a desperate longing now to go home. The possible letter seemed suspended in mid-air in front of the country store; and the isolation in which she and her mother lived was too close, too intense, for even a three days' separation not to make them want to see each other desperately.

When she left, late in the afternoon, Mrs. Boudinot kissed her again, and invited her for a visit in the autumn. She went away, half-pleased, half-frightened with the assurance of the girls that they were coming to see her.

All the youth still left in her—and there was, after all, a great deal—was in evidence as she started on her long walk. She had insisted on walking, to the profound mystification of the colonel, who sat a whole hour in solitude inventing a theory to account for the fact, and half deciding not to send her carpet-bag after her, when his man went to Mulholland.

As she cleared the hemlocks and struck the straight red road and felt the heat beat down, although it was now four o'clock, the two miles ahead of her looked long; but it was worth while.

When she reached the store at the cross-roads, half-way home, there was a circle of irregular moist curls outlining her forehead. Her cheeks were red, and she was white about the lips.

Orlando Orton, who kept the store, stood in the door, and watched her approach. He had not had a customer that afternoon. There was something in her strong, handsome, resolute face that had always held him at a distance against his will. He was forty years old, with a lantern jaw, pale blue, faded, solemn eyes, and an incipient stoop in his shoulders. He was the perennial bachelor of the community, and parsimonious to a degree. The one "drive" which he had taken with Ruth Hallowell was already a neighbourhood tradition, for he had refused to return by a different road on account of the toll; and Ruth, gentle though she was, but starving for some change in her monotonous existence, had paid it herself.

Hannah hated the sight of him as he stood on the edge of the porch across the gable end of the small frame building, before which floated a circle of lazy flies, drawn thither by the concentrated smell of sugar and molasses, ham, and kerosene, which perfumed the approach with a stale, sickening odour.

He watched her climb the rickety porch, smiling when she tripped against a stack of brooms. She had hoped there would be customers, so that she might receive her possible letter without comment.

"Is there any mail?" Her voice wavered in spite of her effort at self-control, and a white streak shot up her cheek.

"Step inside, and I'll look."

She knew now that there was something for her, and her knees trembled.

The storekeeper took out a letter, read the superscription with a curious, meaning smile, peered at Hannah through the empty boxes, and walked leisurely from behind the counter with it. "It's from Virginy," he said. "I didn't know any of your folks had gone to war."

Hannah held out her hand.

"Now, now, don't be impatient. It's too belated to worry about. It's got dates on it three weeks old. I've been studyin' it the hull afternoon. I suppose most of your mail goes to Mulholland, don't it?" he inquired insinuatingly, while reluctantly yielding the letter.

Hannah gave him a flashing look as she took it and turned to leave the store, while Orlando followed her, rubbing his hands conciliatingly.

"If you've got any fresh eggs to sell, Miss Rodman, I won't mind lettin' them go 'gainst that account. It's been a-runnin' on now a good while."

"We haven't any eggs to spare, but mother hopes to settle very soon," she replied in a constrained, throaty voice, and not looking back, all of which informed Orlando that his shot had told.

Hannah hurried on, her heart throbbing, a burning, choking sensation quickening her breath. She was anxious to reach the juniper-trees in the school-house lane. There was one old tree, bushy from the ground to the top; and on its shady side she threw herself down out of sight, and tore the letter open. The writing was not her lover's, and she felt consumed with fear.

But, as she read, a look of exultation, of great happiness, suffused her features. One thought reigned supreme. Marcus Haldane was alive, and neither war nor wounds had prevented him from sending her this message. For a few minutes her joy was so intense that she failed to notice that the letter gave no idea of locality. Even the numerous postmarks served to bewilder her, as the dates were blurred, and some of them evidently by intention. The only consolation she could draw from the closest examination was that the soldier, although in prison, hoped to escape. But

where and how was he confined? Who had written the letter, for it was illiterate in the extreme. She sat brooding over the meagreness and mystery of the news till the deep shade of the junipers warned her of the lateness of the hour.

Mrs. Rodman welcomed her with the eagerness of the solitary mother. She looked whiter and more worried than usual, Hannah thought.

After supper, and while her mother sat on the steps of the back porch, her arms folded aimlessly in her lap, her anxious, sorrowful, dissatisfied eyes fixed upon the wheat waving like dissolving gold in the setting sunlight, Hannah walked down the grass-grown lane with the hope of meeting Sylvester, who sometimes returned at nightfall after a day spent — no one knew where. The pervasive, desolate trill of the frogs emphasised the hour and her loneliness. But pity was a sentiment Hannah never wasted on herself. She was pitying her mother profoundly. A dumb sense of potential energy seeking a beneficent outlet for her mother agitated her.

She had half turned to retrace her steps when, far down the road, near the point where it was lost in the pines, she saw a moving dot. A horseman finally stood out in bold relief, and she began to walk towards him as if some nervous impulse impelled her to hasten the meeting.

Sylvester rode a heavy sorrel mare, which she recognised a long way off, as well as something familiar in the thud and clatter of the creature's hoofs.

As brother and sister came opposite, Hannah advanced and seized the bridle, as if to command the situation.

"Where have you been, Sylvester?"

"Oh, do let me go on. Can't you see that my horse is tired to death?"

"Mother is tired, too. Where have you been?"

"You are enough to drive a man to the devil with your constant questions. Let me go—I say!" And he touched his whip to the mare.

Hannah stepped further in front of the sorrel, and it rubbed affectionately against her shoulder. "Tell me where you have been, Sylvester."

"Where should I have been but at the shore?" His eyes, of a colour with hers, looked sombre in the fading light. "I've been trying to paint,—paint the sea; but my picture was a daub. I tore it up, and threw it away in the pines. I hope you are satisfied."

"Sylvester," and there was a touch of pleading in her voice, although she had ignored the discouragement in his, "if the wheat isn't cut to-morrow, we shall lose every acre of it. Mother is sitting on the back porch now, and her face is enough to break my heart. Won't you cut the wheat to-morrow?"

He looked irresolute. "I'll see about it."

"That means you won't do it."

"I may."

"O—Syl—vester!" But the exclamation begun with regretful tenderness ended, brief as it was, with scorn. She stepped aside to let him pass. After long endurance, her positive, resolute nature had taken deep offence.

Her brother had never seen her look as she did now. She had passed a fiery judgment on him, and his sensitive perceptions recoiled. He responded to the look in nature, in animals, in human beings, more readily than to words. He rode on, startled, ashamed, yet apathetic. He hated the farm. He hated the stolid slowness of farming people. He loved to dream. He loved to read. He loved to sit on the shore all day, and listen to the surf, and scan the lights and shadows. His whole being had become dissolved in sensuousness, and it sought occasional indolent expression in

rhymes and pictures which now and then contained a suggestion of the large, true values in the best art.

But there was no one to point out what was good, to indicate how much was bad, and to convince the dreamer that drudgery lay behind good poetry and painting, as well as good farming. To make matters worse, Sylvester was no longer young in the sense of pursuing a short-lived fancy; and his habit was growing on him.

As Hannah slowly followed, some new energy seemed to animate her. She glanced at the whiteness along the horizon, where the rising moon was beginning to foreshadow its path. When it shone forth, revealing patches, here and there, on distant farms where the grain had been cut, she hastened her steps, and joined her mother, who still sat with the same weary pose.

"Go to bed, mother. If you can't sleep, it will at least rest you to lie down."

"I suppose I might as well. Did Sylvester tell you anything?"

"He has been down to the shore — painting."

Mrs. Rodman shrugged her shoulders, and sighed again.

"Perhaps we ought to feel thankful that his folly is so harmless."

"Perhaps."

The dreariness in the mother's tone was absolute.

Two hours later, when the neglected aspect of the cement house was transformed into a mellow, romantic decay, like nature's own, under the deceptive glow of the moonlight, Hannah stole out of her chamber and listened. The doors of her mother's and brother's rooms stood open. She went on tiptoe to look in.

Mrs. Rodman lay propped high in bed, her strong, severe features haggard and sad; but she was asleep.

As if with some plan on foot for the night or as if too tired to undress, Sylvester had thrown himself on his bed in the rough suit he had worn at the shore. His room was big and airy. The uncurtained windows were wide open. The place was flooded with moonlight, and all that was left of better days showed to advantage. The carved foliage in the plaster cornice, the tracery on the mantel, the valance of the wide four-poster gleamed whiter.

Hannah stepped inside, as if the sight of her brother both attracted and repelled her. His face and throat looked carved out of something finer and warmer than ivory. The life in his very sleep made itself felt powerfully. She stood with her hand on the door, breathless. She was not afraid of him, but something which her imaginative perception at this moment projected awed her. The potential strength slumbering there was, after all, not merely physical. The face on the pillow was strong: it was pure. As she studied it, suspicions which she had long cherished vanished. There was no badness which he had recognised as such. No self-indulgence had scorched him through his grosser nature. He looked like an unaroused giant; and, although a man in years, his expression revealed a certain unrecorded, youthful blankness. Neither mind nor will had yet cried out in the travail of birth. But feeling, emotion, in its finer, impersonal forms, had played with him, allured him, even besotted him. That splendid, beautiful, strong thing lying there was like a piece of earth, made so responsive to colour, sound, light, that it reflected without premeditation or design secrets in nature of which beings with a less perfect physical organisation were unconscious.

Latterly Hannah had felt fretted by the passionate, sensuous gleam in his eyes, the fulness and sensitive-

ness of his lips, the sweep of a golden beard upon his breast, the chiselled regularity of brow and nose, the high forehead showing the dome seldom marked till age begins to encroach upon middle life; and they had become to her signs of a general inefficiency. The mere spell of such outward adornment had once made her believe great things might be in store for him. The last year or two they had affected her like travesties. When she had stood aloof out there in the road, she had curbed her usual impetuous reproaches, not only because of the folly of it all, but also because suddenly, with that dumb persistence of the feminine element to try to fill a breach, that burden-bearing patience of the ages, she had decided to do the man's work, also, rather than let her mother suffer from the friction and discouragement which would follow the loss of the wheat.

But she withdrew from her brother's room now with the look on her face that there might be something tremendously worth the while, after all, in him, and also with the discouraging conviction that neither his home nor his people were likely to call it forth.

Meanwhile there was much to be done; and her will must force her body, tired as she was, to measure up to the need. There could be no sleep for her that night.

She crept downstairs, and stepped noiselessly out upon the shaky porch.

The damp air was penetrated with delicious scents,—honeysuckle, lemon-verbena, linden blossoms. A bird crooned and chuckled his content. Some fowls at roost in a cherry-tree cawed inquiringly. The moonlight shafted the grey rail of the well-sweep, it whitened the stucco of the house, and touched the small-paned windows with ghostly lights.

Hannah hastened to the barn, where, after a little

searching, she found the cradle. The snath was slippery from long handling. Seizing the nibs, she made imaginary sweeps over the floor, as if testing her strength and agility.

Swinging the cradle over her shoulder, she went down the path along the fence of the three-acre wheat-field to where it dipped out of sight of the house. She was bareheaded; and the faint, flower-scented breeze touched her like a tender hand.

Her loose white cotton sack left her muscles free; and presently, with that youthful facility so wonderful, she caught the natural swing of her instrument, and the thickly bearded, golden wheat began to fall in shining swaths. Her weariness disappeared. Beads of sweat moistened her forehead. A buoyant elasticity of spirit and nerve continued to animate her as the hours followed one another.

A broad creek flowed at the foot of the grain-field, and now and then she stopped long enough to scoop up a drink in a cup of hickory leaves. There was a fringe of trees along the creek; and, glancing up to their tops in one of these pauses, she noticed how each leaf stood out against the sky, how the sky began to blanch, how something pure, clear, like a holy presence, pervaded the air. A bird sang, then two or three; and the solitude, hitherto so entire, became peopled, and she had a strange, sweet feeling of belonging to the earth, the sky, and the world of birds and beasts, such as she had never felt before.

If Sylvester felt like this when he lay on the shore,—if he did! Hannah went back to where she had thrown down the cradle, and, picking it up, began to mow. But the new thought interrupted her. The new, sweet, indolent feeling took hold of her, seemed to fold her in an embrace; and, after cutting a few swaths resolutely, she paused, leaned on the handle,

and looked up to the sky again, now covered with overlapping scales of downy pink and white clouds,—looked, and felt the kiss of the morning, and adored.

Her sack was open at the throat. The dampness had laid her dark hair in irregular waves. There were deep circles under her eyes, soft and lustrous with fatigue, and the triumph of unusual effort. Her being was bathed in tenderness. A hungry wistfulness usual in her expression, a constant expectation when she listened,—these were gone.

She was about to begin cradling the wheat again, when a movement under the trees arrested her attention; the next instant a shell of a boat pushed up against the shore, and Sylvester got out. He walked straight across the bands of yellow grain between them.

Leaning on her cradle, Hannah watched him come, the softness lingering in her face and manner.

There was a stride in his step not usual. Presently he lifted his head, and she saw an excitement in his eyes. When he stood in front of her, he put his powerful hands on her shoulders, and stared down into her face; she looked back in a kind of wonder.

“Hannah!” he exclaimed in a husky whisper. “Why did you?” and seizing the cradle, he began to cut with savage energy.

“Sylvester,” she said gently, drawn to him by a new feeling.

“Don’t speak a word to me now, Hannah. I can’t bear it. Go home!” And he cradled with such force that in a moment, as it seemed to the astonished girl, a wide space separated them.

And then, suddenly, Sylvester rushed towards her. He held her face up between his hands. “I am going to take care of you after this. I think—I’ve been asleep, asleep to duty. Hannah,” he said again,—and

The Gipsy's Wrath

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strength.

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he choked. "My God! I never thin

it have been. I have been about outside

and round running, I went to see  
by the old mill to go away, because now  
and cried it all out. As soon as I have, I'll

the station before me, try a distance

But I saw it wasn't you, and the

I heard you. I saw you to be  
look like that before. Human

the sky and the earth and ever

It is in you, come — the  
top of it, and get you home —

Hannah, when you come to  
pick up the cradle —

hands in dramatic shapes,

I'll make a composition

Dry to take a nap home —

Hannah had breakfast ready

the brow of the hill, and he  
was going south with a rapidity

had overslept; but, when

now and perceived half the world

singing his cradle like sun

eyes, looked again, and

out doors and along the

towards the house

what had passed be



seeing, as if for the first time, her great beauty, allied to his own, but how different!—"I went into mother's room about midnight,—why, I don't know. Some impulse led me there. Hannah, mother is going to die." He choked. "My God! I never thought of such a thing; and, Hannah, she is dying of a broken heart. I have been wandering about outdoors ever since, and towards morning I went to the creek up there by the old mill to get my boat and row till I could think it all out. As sure as I live, Hannah, I never saw the situation before and my relation to it—and yours. But I saw it while I was in the boat; and then—and then I heard you. I saw you at the creek. I never saw you look like that before, Hannah,—as if you knew what the sky and the earth and every growing thing says to me. It is in you, too,—the love of it all, the worship of it; and yet you have gone right on. And, then, Hannah, when you came back here, and I saw you pick up the cradle— Oh!" He threw up his hands in dramatic shame. "Go home now, Hannah. I'll cradle a couple of hours till mother is awake, and then I am coming to have a talk with her. Try to take a nap before you start in for the day, do."

By the time Hannah had breakfast ready, the reaper had gained the brow of the hill, and the grain was falling in long swaths with a rapidity wonderful to see.

Mrs. Rodman had overslept; but, when she looked out of her window and perceived half the wheat mown, and Sylvester swinging his cradle like some Titan, she rubbed her weary eyes, looked again, and, dressing in haste, slipped out-of-doors and along the edge of the grain-field.

Mother and son came towards the house at length. Hannah wondered what had passed between them.



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They walked together; and in her brother's face there was a look of energy, of determination. In her mother's there was a new light. But, alas! Hannah saw, too, although for the first time, that the farm and its worries had worn their mother to death.

## XIV.

**W**HEN Captain Haldane awoke from the refreshing sleep which followed after Judith had set his broken bones, it was with a clear recollection of all that had happened from the moment of marching with Warren's corps. Events succeeded one another in thrilling review,—the advance over the pontoon bridge across the Rapidan and along the plank road from Germanna Ford, the bivouac in the vicinity of "Old Wilderness Tavern," the three days' battle, the capture of the burning breastworks, the leafy covert at the mouth of the shaft.

But who had brought him to this apparent cave? Where was the army now? Who commanded his company? How serious were his wounds? Another memory rose,—the memory of a dilapidated cement house, of a row of gnarled cherry-trees in front of it, of a girl standing under the trees at dawn of a June morning and watching him come up the lane to tell her good-bye before joining his regiment. He saw again the blueness of the Jersey sky, the fading brightness of the morning star, and heard the first twitter of the robins, and heard her voice,—Hannah's voice!

On that last morning she had given him her picture, with her name and address on it, in case of accident to him; and he had promised to keep it next his heart. She had said that some one surely would let her know if he were wounded or dead, if her picture were found there. He felt for it. It was gone!

He began to feel a curious lightness in his head, but the memory of Hannah remained like a dream and like a waking. He saw her as she looked during that one year when she attended school in Mulholland,—a tall, unformed girl, with wonderful clear, solemn eyes. He saw himself in his father's law office, watching her

pass day after day, and loving her looks before he loved her.

And then they met; but his mother had ambitions for an only son which Hannah could not gratify, and Mrs. Rodman, with wounded pride on her side, forbade him to come to see Hannah. Thus the spontaneity of a tender affection which had bloomed out of youth, affinity, and unworldliness was checked.

Then he had gone to college, to Europe; and Hannah had lived on at the farm. They had neither forgotten nor ceased to love each other; while both had come to feel that, since they had stood the test of the separation, riper years justified their clandestine meetings. Their relation, under such circumstances, had not been a happy one; for they were upright young people, lovers of truth. But they were old-fashioned American lovers, also, to whom plighted faith was binding. And then war was declared, and he had enlisted as captain of his own company of volunteers.

Some such summary the young soldier made as he lay between waking and dreaming, and with the underlying feeling that Hannah and he had taken greater comfort in each other since his enlistment. Their future together had seemed nearer, more reasonable. He fell asleep again.

While he was asleep, the door softly opened and a slender mulatto girl stole in, her face full of curiosity. She crept up to the bed. The pocket of the captain's coat bulged, and she felt in it with pilfering deftness. She found nothing but a handkerchief, but she took it. She went from one thing to another with the nimbleness of a cat, feeling where she could not see, and at length pulled out from behind the stack of guns a morocco pocket-case. With a smile of satisfaction and an admiring glance at the sleeping soldier, she disappeared.

In the case was Hannah's picture and fifty dollars in United States bills,—an enormous sum with Confederate currency so depreciated that flour was forty dollars a barrel and calico thirty dollars a yard.

The girl had been gone but a few minutes when Judith returned. A glance at her patient showed that he was doing well, and she went to the guns and felt behind for the case.

Her expression was interesting. Like a shadow across the dignity, affectionateness, and tenderness which Captain Haldane had felt and trusted brooded an animal cunning and perplexity. The blending of two races and contradictory propensities showed in that handsome face. She looked like a lioness despoiled of its prey. Instinct had triumphed over moral force. It had not been clear to her own mind till the case was gone that she had intended to keep the money. Then she wanted it savagely. Accusation would be useless, for among the Southern blacks the crime lies in the carelessness which makes the theft possible. She condemned herself for not putting the case in safer hiding.

Ever since Moses and she had taken their liberty through the exigencies of war, they had been acquiring possessions by plunder from the dead and from abandoned homes, although very rarely had much United States money fallen into their hands. Their one ambition was to become landholders, their imitative instinct rather than any clear perception of the positive value of land leading them to consider it of paramount desirability. To purchase Northern land, United States money was necessary.

Judith's cunning was infinite. The money must be stolen back, and she bent her energies to discover the thief.

Captain Haldane's bones knit successfully, but a low

fever developed, and for a month Judith nursed him with the help of some of the other women.

Sally, the mulatto who had stolen the case, carried his meals to him; and before long a burning jealousy of Hannah set in. She studied the photograph till Hannah's face cut into her perpetual vision, and out of sheer hatred was about to destroy it, when it disappeared, together with the money wrapped around it.

Meanwhile grim events took place on the Wilderness battlefield. Night after night the sick soldier heard the shuffling of feet past his door, as if weighty articles were being dragged along the passage. Above ground, back and forth through those tangles and swamps and forests wherever the battle had raged, wandered the coloured people of the mine, looking for booty. Bodies hitherto undiscovered were stripped and buried; the great trenches dug by the army to receive their dead were opened, and whatever was valuable in the way of clothing, whatever trinket or roll of money had been overlooked in the hasty burial, was taken. No fear of disease, no horror of decay, no revolt from the stench, deterred those squads of seekers glutting for the first time in their lives the voluptuous greed of possession. Greed and fear and gregariousness kept them together in their subterranean recesses. The piles of army clothing and weapons, the ammunition hidden in holes in the rock along those ramifying passages, held many a vagrant in the mine by the magic charm of property.

In those dark caves, family affection, long deprived of its normal expression, began to have a fantastic development. There were rivalries and ambitions, a reassorting of families on primitive foundations. Old names were cast aside and new ones chosen. Instinct established what later custom, opportunity, and some degree of education might confirm. It was the birth

out of bondage into freedom of a new people, and it glimmered with instances of generosity like that of the care of Captain Haldane.

Thefts among themselves were constant, but out of the hurt of the loss grew the notion of honesty. It was Moses' and Judith's quicker perception of causes and effects that gave them a natural leadership in this rude organisation which was in vigorous existence at the time of the battle of the Wilderness.

When Judith told Captain Haldane that he might sit up, the summer was already advanced. The army was sixty miles away, and the siege of Richmond assuming strategic magnitude.

The negroes held the secret of the mine of such importance that the captain was informed that for the present he must consider himself a prisoner. But such friendly relations had been established by his long illness, and he was still so weak, that he was not very closely watched. It was at this juncture, although after long persuasion, that Moses had written the letter which Hannah had received, and which he had insisted on composing according to his own ideas and sending by such a devious route that it was impossible for her to discover where her lover was.

The captain took his first exercise under Judith's escort in the passage outside his room. She carried a torch; in its smoky flame the grim walls gleaming with pyrites gave him a weird, fantastic sense of unreality. When Sally darted from behind a ledge, like the shadow of a shadow, a cold sweat broke out over him.

Judith flared the torch in Sally's face; and the discovered girl stood defiant, yet bold, her sensual prominent black eyes drinking in the situation of the sick man and his supporter with jealous longing.

"Go back, Sally," said Judith, imperatively. "Ef

you bodd'er de cap'n agin, Moses'll t'row you down one  
of dese deep, dark holes,— sho's you live, he will!"  
She flourished her torch dangerously near Sally's face.

The girl broke into a shrill laugh, and ran away into  
the darkness; while Judith led the convalescent back  
to bed.

"Seems es dough dese nigger gals cyant t'ink of  
nuttin' but lubbin'. I 'clar hit makes me sick. Don't  
you tek no notice of Sally, cap'n. She's a monst'ous  
bad girl, an' jes good fer nuttin'."

No foolish sentiment had stirred Judith. The position  
she had achieved and the exercise of authority  
served to foster in her an impersonality in harmony  
with her superb dignity and splendid beauty. Like  
a mother and queen, she saw that the young man was  
comfortable, and then withdrew.

Only the scrutiny of love could have recognised  
the convalescing captain. His emaciation was ex-  
treme. His beard was long and uneven, his hair  
wiry and faded, while his pallor from sickness and loss  
of sunlight was so intense that his sunken eyes gleamed  
with unnatural brilliancy. But, notwithstanding his  
discouraging appearance and the trials of his situa-  
tion, health was returning; and he only awaited an  
opportunity to explore the mine to effect his escape.

Meanwhile he became a familiar figure in the tribal  
living-room. He talked with the old men and crones,  
and from their descriptions and anecdotes formed a  
definite notion of empty houses for miles in the vicinity  
of the Wilderness, where he might hide or gain a tem-  
porary shelter. When there was continued rain in the  
upper world, he knew it by the drip along the pas-  
sages.

One day Judith, having conducted him to a remote  
shaft choked with débris, pointed to the water which  
had risen to within a few feet of the level.

"Moses an' me hev come hyah off 'n' on for ten yeah, an' hit's never riz higher'n dat. De walls all 'roun' shows dat hit's allus been dry, too." There was an anxious query in her eyes as she glanced at the captain, as if she feared he might challenge her assurance of security.

Seizing her torch, he held it over the horrible pit and lit up the slimy, inky water, partially covered by a mass of broken scaffolding caught in the sides and intersecting above the surface just where it had fallen in the distant, forgotten past.

To his keener, more intelligent inspection, the scaffolding and mouth of the shaft showed traces of submergence, although long ago and possibly before the mine was so extensive. He walked down the passage, flaring the light in every direction.

"Ain't nebber been no flood hyah!" asserted Judith, scrutinising the illuminated places.

"I am not so sure,—but not recently, at all events. Suppose there should be a flood? How would we all get out?"

"Lawd Gawd A'mighty only knows! De old uns an'de childens'd be drounded like rats. But de oders, onless de water come mighty sudden, dey'd git along."

While the captain lay awake, thinking of possibilities that night, the mine seemed to press upon him with the horrors of the grave. Springing from his bed with a feeling of suffocation, he felt for the door. It was locked. He stood overwhelmed with apprehension, every nerve strained to unnatural acuteness. Suddenly he heard a step, apparently on the opposite side of his cave. Groping stealthily towards the sound, he stopped half-way, and listened. The noise now seemed to come from the other side of the wall; and, with more assurance, he went on till he could touch the rocks. A roaring, like the fall of a distant cataract,

became audible. All at once he heard Moses' voice, then other voices; and then they died away. Some passage of the mine must extend back of the cave he was in, and with a possible egress to the outside world. Perhaps there was a secret connection with his place of confinement. He had frequently wondered over the arsenal-like condition of his quarters,—over the contents of those boxes, nailed and corded as if filled with valuables. If they were ever to be taken above ground, why were they apparently so remote from any opening?

The wick of the Confederate candle burning beside his bed early in the evening was so nearly consumed that he had extinguished it, to be used in case of an emergency. He now lighted it, and examined the wall. Not a crack! He tapped against it, but it sounded solid. Lost in reflection, he leaned against one of the boxes, in his abstraction rubbing away the hay on the floor with his foot, and discovered, to his surprise, that they rested on a wheeled platform plumb with their sides. By pushing against this platform with all his strength, he was able to move it a few inches. A whiff of cold air blew in; and, thrusting his candle into the crack behind the platform, he caught a glimpse of an opening in the wall. He pushed again, the perspiration beading his forehead, his heart palpitating with weakness.

A steady current of wind now rushed through with an earthy smell. There was the sound of a great volume of falling water not far off. He looked again. Another push would clear a passage large enough for his body, and the candle would last ten minutes longer. But, in his eagerness, forgetting to shade the light, it flared up and went out; and he had used his last match. He turned cold with faintness, but, recovering, succeeded, by groping and protracted effort, in restoring the platform to its original position. Scraping the

hay in place by feeling, he threw himself down on the bed, falling at once into a deep, refreshing sleep.

When Moses brought matches and another candle the next morning, the captain had laid his plans. Throughout the day he carried on a system of petty theft, and by night had secreted enough candles about his person to last a week. Meanwhile he was impressed with the mysterious coming and going of the blacks and with the general evidences of an impending migration. The pickaninnies were dressed in their most incongruous finery; the old men and women sat on bundles of clothing; and, whenever Moses appeared in the assembly, his manner was abstracted.

Towards noon, Judith beckoned to Haldane, and again led him to the shaft, now full nearly to the brim.

"Ef hit gits chock full, hit'll run off dar — down hill — fur a time. We'se all ready for de flight. We'se child'en a Israel, we is."

"Judith," said the captain, sternly, "show me the shaft down which Moses carried me."

She obeyed, but reluctantly; and the soldier realised her stress.

There was a look of cunning on her face when they came to the opening, and after so many turnings that, in spite of his efforts to the contrary, his confusion was complete.

"You couldn't neber come back hyah alone. Hit's a puzzle hit'd tek a long time to learn widout de signs."

Above them was a strip of sky, grey and lowering, like a lid threatening to drop at any moment. But down the shaft came a breath of the outside world, glimmers of daylight; and Haldane's heart beat fast with the longing for freedom.

"We don' use dis shaft no more," said Judith. "Dat ladder ain't safe."

Suspecting that the passage back of his cave must be the present outlet, Haldane determined with a resolution born of the general horror of the place to try to escape that night.

A fine mist, so diffused that he was at first unaware of it, moistened his face. He peered up once more.

"Hit's rainin' hard," said Judith; "an' hit's rained an' rained for a week. We'se so far down dat raal draps cyant reach us. Hit's a mighty hard rain up on de yearth when you c'n feel de mist hyah."

A reminiscence of the circular opening in the Roman Pantheon made the prisoner feel the truth of her statement. He leaned over the portion of the shaft below him. "The water looks disturbed. Is it usually as high as this?"

"Sometimes hit's so far down you cyant see hit. But you can allus hyah it. Dere's allus water dere," said Judith, as if this fact modified the present condition.

"If you brought me here to ask my advice, you had better get out of this mine instantly. We are all in the greatest danger."

She obstinately shook her head. "Moses say it gwine stop rainin' dis arternoon. Ef it stops, de water won't rise no more."

"Yes, it will. It will keep on rising for several hours. For God's sake, Judith," and he seized her shoulders, "show me the way out. We are not sure of our lives a minute."

An expression of fear and greed swept over her face, — greed of her accumulated possessions, fear of sudden death. But greed and the incredulity of ignorance triumphed, and she led him back by another and still more circuitous way, doggedly reiterating that there wasn't any danger.

Towards night the captain discovered that the sudden

appearance and disappearance of the strong-bodied men and women was connected with the removal of their booty. But still the old people clustered about their bundles, and the children began to fall asleep, propped in all their finery against the walls.

A damper smell than usual pervaded the passages and caves; and, when Moses forced the captain to return to his retreat, it was with a solemn and gentle impressiveness which might be connected with near deliverance or destruction. On the threshold he pleaded once more for his freedom. "Are you going to shut me in here, like a rat in a hole? I can't injure you. I won't tell your secrets."

"Judith say yo' must stay till we ain't got no secrets to keep. Judith's mighty fond of yo', cap'n. She'd be sorry tohev harm happen to yo'. Ain't she nussed you like a chile? Jes' hev patience till de war stops, en yo'll git yo're freedom. We'll all go Norf togoder den."

Haldane turned away without another word, and Moses made no ado over locking the rude but strong door. The captain lay down and waited. Hours seemed to pass—hours of continued silence—before he could dare begin to remove the hay; but, when he had done so, and pushed with all his strength against the platform, to his surprise it gave a lurch, slipping far ahead.

The boxes were empty! For the first time he realised that, by one device and another, he had been detained all day at a distance from his room. He despised himself that his perceptions had not equalled the cunning of the slaves.

Assuring himself that his matches were dry, he took the candle that Moses had left burning, and, shading it with his hand, groped through the passage, which was tortuous, low, and of considerable length.

Emerging into an immense cave, the gloom of which he tried, but in vain, to pierce with his tiny light, he ran along the walls, hither and thither, in search of another opening, and with the sound of falling water so near and distinct that he had a horrid fear of plunging into it at any moment. In his despair and perplexity, his limbs trembling with weakness and excitement, he rushed towards the centre, and fell over a mass of ore. Picking himself up, bruised and bleeding, his hope nevertheless revived; for the vast chamber was evidently some portion of the ancient mine, and doubtless with a better outlet than the one by which he had entered.

Proceeding more cautiously, with his light now held near the floor, he came upon a rude but gently sloping flight of steps. So intense was his joy that he began to run down, but paused midway, overcome with the thought that the stairs might end in space. Feeling his way with great care, he soon had the gratification of reaching level ground and stepping on a dry, earthy surface. Convinced that the outside world could not be far distant, he advanced with more confidence, but with each step the roar of the water increased, and, on coming to a turn in the passage, he halted in perplexity, as it forked in three directions.

He chose the broadest; but the soil quickly became moist, and he stepped suddenly into deep water. Turning back, he fled at random down a second passage, only to be stopped abruptly by the cataract, which was a natural overflow from the surface, but turbid and angry and carrying down floating limbs and débris. Although there was no time to lose he stood entranced with the sight of the windy clouds above the yellow torrent. Near as the outside world appeared, however, it was inaccessible; and, retracing his steps, he tried the third corridor, rockier than the others, but

leading steadily upward from the moment he entered its mouth. A final angle brought him face to face with such a gust of rain-laden wind that his light went out, but the smell of the outside world and the feeling of the gale through his hair were so blissful that he ran on for sheer joy. His sight had grown so accustomed to darkness that it was semi-nocturnal; and, notwithstanding the confusion of wind and rain, he could see a strip of forest a short distance ahead.

He had gone but a few rods in the woods when he heard the patter of numerous feet. An instant after he could discern, within speaking distance, Moses and Judith, followed by a band of men and women with rude lanterns, the faces of all exhibiting the greatest consternation. While he was looking and wondering where to turn, they disappeared as if in the very bowels of the earth.

Concluding that he was near another opening, and curiosity and love of adventure leading him momentarily to forget his own danger, as well as the possible loss of his factitious strength, he lighted a candle, and, shading it successfully, crept to the spot where he had seen the negroes vanish.

He discovered a gently inclined shaft, so skilfully overhung by vines and shrubs that he might have passed it a dozen times under ordinary circumstances. Advancing down the tunnel, which was of considerable breadth and perfectly dry, he noticed bales of cotton, trunks, barrels, bundles, and a heterogeneous mass of things piled along the sides,—contraband of war in as grim a sense as their present owners.

The passage began to ascend; and, almost before he was aware, he found himself in the tunnel along which Judith had led him for his first walk. Hiding behind a projection, he listened; for there was a distant commotion and din of voices from the great cave where

the blacks had usually congregated. All at once a pool of water gathered about his feet; horror-stricken, he turned to flee, when his surroundings flared with light, and a wail of fear echoed through those grim vaults and resounding tunnels, as the dusky refugees hurried past him, panic bleaching their faces to a deathly, clay-like aspect. Their clothes were dripping, and theplash of their scurrying feet in the rising water was terrible in its suggestiveness.

Before the captain could realise the full horror of the situation, the crowd had vanished far down the tunnel, their lurid torches waving, their cries echoing fainter and fainter. He rushed out after them, a thrill of nervous excitement giving him new strength. But, even while he was gaining on them, they disappeared, their screams sounding distant, and then ceasing, like the recessional singing of a choir.

Collecting his nerve with a tremendous effort of will, he lighted another candle, and, stooping, measured the depth of the water as well as the force of the current. The black, shiny, oily stream was already several inches deep. He sprang foward. But his light, like a will-o'-the-wisp in that dreadful blackness, hindered as well as helped him; his race only served to bring him to the shaft choked by the broken scaffolding.

Something was struggling in the midst of it. He flashed his light down. That instant there was a thud in the black water, and he saw Sally's despairing features as she sank into those inaccessible, turbid depths. With a shuddering cry, he turned back; and now the water was a foot deep. If he could not find the place where he had emerged into the main passage, he was lost.

He ran to where he thought he had started, only to come against a wall. He retraced his steps, to see

again the pit where Sally had disappeared. But, with better success a second time, he gained the passage with which he was most familiar, groped along the wall to the projection behind which he had hidden, the water deepening about his feet, and shortly regained the shaft by which he had entered.

By this time the current was flowing rapidly; but he realised that, unless there was some obstruction, the depth would not materially increase during the brief interval needed to reach the outside. Gradually, however, his progress became checked by floating barrels, bundles, boxes, bales of cotton; and the water rose to his knees. He waded through, armed with the courage and strength of despair, and once more felt the rain-laden wind.

And then, suddenly, his way was blocked.

A row of barrels had piled near the mouth of the shaft, and at first sight looked insurmountable. Dripping, panting, hot and chilly at once, Captain Haldane pulled himself over to the other side, fell his full length in the water, but crawled out and fled into the woods.

A gigantic sycamore uprooted by the winds, and with an enormous hole in its trunk, suggested a hiding-place. Backing into it, his face near the opening, and drawing down some of the broad-leaved foliage for a curtain, he composed himself to watch, but fell asleep, exhausted from his recent illness and the prolonged excitement of the night.

## XV.

THE conditions of the war were such during the summer of 1864 that none of our Mulholland friends were sufferers beyond the chronic anxiety to which they had in a measure become accustomed.

Cornelia's husband was active in the siege of Petersburg, as he was in the advance of Warren's corps south and west of Richmond. Her son, stationed at Bermuda Hundred under Butler, made numerous sallies up and down the James; but his risks were not extreme, and he had escaped without injury on the few occasions when his life was exposed. The news from Gordon Manners and his wife, both of whom were within the Confederate line of defence investing Richmond, was received at irregular and rare intervals; but, such as it was, it tended to soothe the fears of their daughters.

Meanwhile the young Southerners had interested themselves deeply in Hannah, and had besieged Mrs. Rodman with so much affability and sincerity that their visits occurred at all hours without seriously interrupting the laborious routine of life in the cement house or annoying the older woman with the mortifying exposure incident to a homestead in the process of ruinous decay. Both girls had a way with them which combined visiting with helpfulness to such a degree that often Hannah's duties were lightened instead of hindered, and she learned to listen with an ear of love for the sound of their horses as they turned from the turnpike into the lane. Mrs. Rodman would watch the sisters canter up to the kitchen door and spring from the saddle with the fearlessness of women accustomed all their lives to riding, and meet them with a genuine welcome.

Sylvester was much at home now, and certainly

mother and daughter had nothing to complain of in his present relation to the farm. His attitude to life seemed to have undergone not only a sudden, but an effectual, revolution. He rose at dawn, attending regularly to the homely chores which hitherto much of the time Mrs. Rodman had been obliged to do. He harvested the grain, and, as the season advanced, dug the late potatoes, gathered the fruit, and in the intervals between the harvests mended fences, tinkered at broken stalls and sagging doors, and trimmed trees to such an extent that, dilapidated as the house and its surroundings still looked, they nevertheless showed marked evidence of improvement.

The young man was, however, imposing a restraint upon himself which had its dangers. His dreamy, sensuous proclivities lurked in the background, and demanded satisfaction. But there was Hannah, measuring up to homely duty with the persistence of dull old age; and she had been doing so for years. Whenever temptation assailed him,—and this it did nearly every morning when the dew was on the grass, and the flowers were heavy with fragrance, and the breeze was whispering of the forest or the sea,—he recalled the picture of his sister cradling wheat under the solemn, starry sky. That picture enabled him to thrust aside his vagrant longings, and to milk the cows and feed the pigs and horses with the sober attention of a man whose fancy never soars above the barn-yard or the plough.

Sometimes he was busy near the house when the sisters rode up, and then Patty would place her lovely hand on his shoulder, and her blue eyes and cheek, with its fine, delicate blush, would come near his face as she dismounted; and all day long he would thrill with the memory.

After a while, as he got used to the visits, he would

spar with Virginia; and such good fellowship sprang up with her that occasionally Mrs. Rodman would find herself looking at them with a kind of ambitious wonder. The Southerners aroused her pride in a more healthful way than Mrs. Haldane had done. They had such a magnificent way of taking an awkward situation for granted, such a grandiose habit of dilating on the poverty of the South, the privations of the first families, and the glory of belonging to men with a military record, that she caught their spirit and began to talk about her own 'antecedents,—a subject most families in the North affected to despise in the sixties. And then, too, alas! there was a daily slow ebb in her strength, which sapped the sources of her passionate, disappointed nature, and made her acquiescent in the happenings of each day. A tenderness crept into her tone and look which revealed to her daughter's reflective disposition a temperament naturally warm, impulsive, and dependent. It had never occurred to Hannah before that her mother's brooding or coldly matter-of-fact and repellent expression concealed an open, generous nature. Day by day the mask of untoward circumstances grew transparent, and finally disappeared; and Hannah recognised that something besides the natural tie and their common loneliness had not only awakened, but maintained in her the simplicity and intensity of the purest filial affection.

Meanwhile Catherine, too, whose life had flowed along like one of those sylvan streams so transparent that each pebble in its bed seems to catch the sunlight, and in such a slow though steady current that, to carry the figure further, one would expect to meet along its entire course only those inviting and peaceful beauties consistent with its rural and unchecked progress,—Catherine, too, felt the intrusion of disturbing forces. Like all women whose lives are sheltered,

and who grow up in affluent circumstances and under conditions of the most literal uprightness in word and act, she was at once dazzled, attracted, and repelled by a companion like Virginia, who one moment was on the verge of some act outrageous to propriety or honour, but the next revealed such reckless nobility of speech or conduct that most of the Mulholland young people unconsciously accepted her as their leader. But Catherine usually avoided her, although it was impossible for them to remain completely separated; for the round of tea-parties and picnics, of excursions and country-house visiting, once set in motion, had to be kept up until the near relatives of the Manners, the Boudinots, the Schuylers, and the Livingstons had also contributed to the summer gayeties. As the connections of these families were numerous, the end still appeared far distant when the storm which had compelled the exodus from the mine swept up the Jersey coast with a preliminary gale, and settled into one of those long-continued gusty deluges which strip the trees of branches, flood the lowlands, and usher in an early autumn.

Catherine met Frank at these gatherings, but their relations were of the most formal character. It was inevitable that he should sometimes sit beside her at supper or in a carriage full of young people, or talk with her on the piazzas or in the old-fashioned country parlours, with their scarcity and simplicity of furniture and drapery, where everybody was under full observation. But what a different Catherine! What a stately, constrained young woman, in whose clear, sweet, quiet eyes no half-lights of sentiment wavered or reflected themselves in a blush!

All Mulholland became interested in the rupture. The gossip over it went on like an underground fire, the extent of its damage for a long time unsuspected. Catherine was profoundly ignorant, not only that the

village had taken it for granted for years that she would marry Frank Livingston, but ignorant, also, that public sympathy was in arms against her, and ignorant, indeed, of the fact that she was the subject of comment one way or the other.

Virginia watched the strained relations between the lovers with more amusement than remorse. To her, Catherine was losing a delicious opportunity for half-rebuffs and half-allurements, and missing the luxury of what was in the nature of an art,—not, indeed, so much an art which she had consciously acquired as one born out of her more primitive instinct and, at the same time, freer and richer social opportunity.

Virginia had never lain awake for any man, although many a man had lost his sleep for her. But Catherine knew what it was to count the hours off, one by one, from midnight till daylight, to suffer in a kind of youthful amazement over her plight, but to rise, morning after morning, as obdurate and firm and cold in her treatment of Frank as if her struggle had but just begun.

And Frank understood. For him henceforth Catherine, and Catherine alone, was the one object in life worth having, the one woman in the whole world.

Mary sometimes acted as if she were cherishing a secret grievance against Catherine, for she was the kind of girl who was so hedged in by her adoration of her brothers that they described her orbit and limited her spontaneity. It was difficult for Mary to see an issue outside of her brother's wishes, selfish or unselfish.

After Frank's attempt at a reconciliation, it seemed to her that a gradual adjustment between the lovers ought to be the most obvious and natural thing in the world; and, from being able at first to justify Catherine, she had finally conceived the idea that, if Catherine

had possessed more of Virginia's warmth and impulsiveness, Frank would never have been guilty of weakness and vacillation. She was in this frame of mind when her brother burst in upon her, and, throwing himself with reckless excitement into a chair, exclaimed: "I am going as a substitute for Timothy Robotham. If I don't separate myself from Catherine for a while, I shall lose my senses."

She dropped her sewing, and sat speechless.

"Don't look at me in that way, Mary."

"But, Frank! What will mother do?"

"The bounty will provide for mother for a while. Everybody says that Grant and Sherman will bring the war to a close soon."

"Is it—all settled?" gasped Mary.

He nodded. "I am going next week. Well, there are a lot of things to do; and I must not sit here. Mary," he said, rising, and standing with his hands on her shoulders, "make mother understand, will you? It is only for six months."

"But what if you should be shot?" And Mary's voice broke in a sob.

"I?" He laughed. "No such good luck! Oh, I don't mean that, Mary. I'm sorely pressed." He rubbed his hands through his hair, ashamed and embarrassed. "I'll talk more with you to-night," and, picking up his hat, he went out.

## XVI.

WITH Frank's enlistment and his departure for Virginia, the summer in Mulholland ended. Catherine had expected him to come to bid her good-bye, but he had gone without seeing her; and the letter, which for a while she confidently awaited, did not arrive. A conviction then surprised her that his interpretation of her restraint and coldness was literal, and that their separation was now final. At first she was able to believe herself glad; but, when the news of Sheridan's attack on Winchester was posted on the bulletins and she came face to face with it unawares, a wave of agonised feeling swept over her, and Frank as soldier and possible martyr grew to be the one absorbing emotion of her heart. Every grain of news filtering into the community about the campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, every newspaper despatch on the subject, Catherine heard or read, but maintained a characteristic silence that fed upon her very existence.

She did not see Mary for several weeks; for Mary withdrew completely from social life, making the care of her mother her excuse.

Now Mary hitherto had managed to see Catherine very often; the longer, therefore, she stayed away, the more Catherine dreaded her possible reproaches, the more reticent she felt concerning Frank. Her will seemed paralysed whenever she thought of seeking Mary.

Mrs. Manners and her nieces returned to Mulholland in September. Virginia, sobered by the turn the break between the lovers had taken, relapsed into a general hauteur of manner towards everybody, and writing to her uncle Jared, begged to pass the winter in Washington.

Patty assisted Catherine in various hospital charities

incident to the war, and Virginia daily found fault with her for indirectly hampering The Cause. Patty defended her conduct on humanitarian principles, while declaring herself a more ardent Confederate than ever. She was not only homesick, but heartsick these days; for Mulholland was deeply stirred by the drafting of several men older than those it had sent to the front before, as well as by the return of others who had come home on furlough to recuperate, and by a train full of sick and wounded sent there from Petersburg to fill the hospital recently opened through the efforts of Mr. Manners.

The food at the hospital was supplied by daily gifts pouring in from the citizens of Mulholland and from neighbouring villages and farms. Mrs. Manners' mornings were spent in receiving and assorting it, and her afternoons in dressing wounds or soothing the sick or reading to the convalescent. John frequently accompanied her, his mother holding it of the first importance that he should grasp the meaning of war, the sacredness of peace, the value of a country, and the sacrifice of a father and brother now on the very battle-fields from which all those sick and wounded and dying men had come.

On the Rodman farm, Sylvester continued steadily at work, until the rickety old barns were filled with such a store of grain and winter vegetables as they had not known in many a year, and the land lay shorn or fallow under the white frosts. There were several cords of newly cut hickory piled under the open gable of the wood-house. The animals, too, looked sleek and well-fed. Moreover, what had not been the case within Hannah's memory, her mother possessed two hundred dollars, given to her by Sylvester when he came home late one night in September. The equinoctial gale was roaring around the house that night,

whipping the yellowing leaves from the trees and spattering the rain against the small-paned windows.

Hannah chid herself when Sylvester did not return for feeling suspicious and apprehensive; and Mrs. Rodman, now far gone in a decline, fidgeted and went often to the windows, trying to peer through the streaming glass into the sounding gloom without.

And then Sylvester had come in, after all, unexpectedly, his water-soaked boots red with mud, his golden beard curling and damp, his expression energetic and radiant; and he had laid the money in his mother's lap without a word.

After that night, Hannah's dependence on her brother was open and joyful.

## XVII.

**A**FTER the excitement in Mulholland incident to the arrival of the soldiers had subsided, the little town settled into temporary lethargy. But there were heartaches in nearly every household, and the life of the entire community revolved about the daily mails and bulletins.

Meanwhile the Union forces were making attacks more or less futile upon the Confederate intrenchments on both sides of the James. Sheridan was sweeping north and south through the Shenandoah Valley, reducing the rich granary from which Lee's army had fed so long. The blockade of Wilmington, the most important seaport remaining to the belligerents, was strenuously enforced, and Fort Fisher, which dominated it, twice attacked. The fort fell, and early in the winter the army of Northern Virginia lost its last seaport north of the Gulf of Mexico.

Sherman's manœuvres in the cotton States were assuming vast strategic importance, and his army approached nearer and nearer to that of Grant.

At every point; from the coast to the recently captured section of the Weldon Railroad, the man in brown slowly pushed his forces closer to the invested capital, the pawn of national unity. Like a circle of mountains raised by some gigantic upheaval, the Union armies, directed by a commander-in-chief from whom exigency evoked supreme military genius, walled in the doomed army of Northern Virginia.

The late autumn crept into early winter. Within the triple line of the Confederate defences, never overcome with fatigue, never ill, showing few traces of care and displaying the exercise of that remarkable ability which has placed him among the great military leaders of the world, General Lee continued to sit in

his saddle all day, to write and plan and deliberate far into the night, to study calmly and affectionately the individual wants of his depleting ranks. In the intrenchments, in camp, the grey hair, the broad-brimmed grey felt hat, the ruddy cheeks, the cavalry top-boots, the coat collar with three stars, were familiar sights; and, like Washington, Lee was regarded by his army as both father and saviour. Without condescension, but never without dignity; without hauteur, but never failing in courtesy; sympathetic and magnetic; modest and scholarly in all his written records; brief in speech and straightforward in statement,—he controlled his army with the absolute charm of Napoleon, and, until the surrender at Appomattox, imbued it with the spirit of loving obedience.

Among his most trusted advisers was General Manners, who was also unflagging in his efforts and much beloved by his corps. But General Manners was in marked contrast to General Lee. Pride, verging on arrogance, was in the glance of his eye, in the accents of his voice. A generosity bordering on extravagance had, however, always characterised his attitude towards his equals, while an indulgence of those who were faithful to him, added to a magnificent presence, awoke the enthusiasm of his officers and commanded the admiration of his soldiers. Like that of his commander, General Manners's hair had turned white during the war, although his energy and military bearing indicated a physical constitution still unimpaired.

On the bluffs overlooking the north side of the river, and on the road towards Richmond's historic cemetery, stood a red brick house, its gable towards the street and ornamented by a stone porch from which rose six Corinthian pillars supporting a roof shading big windows, set, in the Philadelphia fashion of that day, in white casements. In the midst of the want, the rag-

gedness, the disorder incident to military investment, this old Manners homestead continued a conspicuous landmark and an unmarred vestige of the opulence and dignity of a typical Virginia city home.

It was here that the colony of refugees from the Rapidan and Rappahannock gathered, until its ample roof sheltered several widows made by the war, a half-dozen young women in the first bloom of their beauty, and various relatives of the Manners, the Copleys, the Stuarts, the Lees, and other prominent families. Occasionally its library was used for secret conferences between Lee and his officers. Important military papers, a considerable sum of Federal money for a possible time of direful need, disguises for flight, and valuable plate and jewels, the ancestral belongings of fugitives from all parts of the South, were hoarded and concealed in this house.

Mrs. Manners became the natural guardian of a vast collection of heirlooms, the extent and magnificence of which had probably never before been gathered under a single American roof. The hospitality she exercised, simple and meagre though her table was from the necessities of the case, the throng of people by whom she was constantly surrounded, the responsibilities she carried, had kept her enthusiasm strung to the highest pitch and her faith in the final glory and triumph of the Confederacy undimmed.

Virginia fed upon the courage and pride in her mother's letters, all the more because they could be received only at rare intervals; but Patty, by November, went off by herself, and wept after reading them. They seemed to her like smiles on the eve of disgrace, and her solicitude was profound over her mother's failure to perceive how critical and sinister the investment of Richmond was.

There was an undercurrent of soberness and reti-

cence in the letters of General Manners which fretted Virginia and made Patty long more anxiously than ever to go home.

In the midst of a discussion between the sisters one afternoon on the aspects of the war, John came in with a telegram. He handed it to Virginia, and nestled against Patty.

"It is from Aunt Anne, and we are to go to Washington as soon as we can get ready. O—Patty!"

Patty's arm around John relaxed. A bright pink spot shone on either waxy cheek. Her expression became solemn and exalted. "We shall be only one hundred and thirty miles from Richmond, sister."

"We'll get there yet, Patty."

"Are you going to see my papa, Patty dear, when you go to Richmond?" whispered John.

Patty stroked his straight brown hair and kissed him, shaking her head sorrowfully, and as John turned away, a quiver in his sensitive face, she caught him in her arms. "We are both going to see our papas soon, John. The war is going to close—very soon! Yes, it is,—it is!" she added comfortingly, as the boy looked at her with wistful incredulity.

"O Patty, do let John alone and pay attention to me," cried Virginia, pettishly. "He is too young to really miss his father. It is mere imitation of his mother. What shall we wear on the journey? Aunt Anne, you know, is very particular."

John had hidden his face against Patty's back, and a dry little sob arrested Virginia.

"John," she said sternly, "leave the room. We want to talk."

"Then I shall go, too." Patty faced her indignantly.

"Oh, dear, what a pair of idiots! Here, child." And, with a ravishing smile, she handed John a bit of candy.

He shook his head, retreating slowly towards the door. Then, with a sudden adoring look, as if overwhelmed with worship of Patty, he rushed back, put his arms about her knees, kissed her dress, and fled.

"He is not an ordinary child, Virginia, and we ought never to hurt his feelings," said Patty, as the door closed.

"I suppose he isn't, but I get very tired of him. About our frocks,—what do you think we ought to wear?"

"We will talk about that later, sister, for I have something strange to tell you. I have been hesitating about it all day; but, as long as we are going away, it can't do any harm to tell you. Do you remember that Captain Featherstone who escorted us through the lines?"

Virginia nodded with a glance of coquetry and softening beauty.

"He is in the hospital. I saw him this morning. He is badly injured. He was struck by a shell. He knew me, and asked after you. I think—he is in love with you. It is dreadful, isn't it?" concluded Patty, looking at her sister with ingenuous dismay.

Virginia smiled. "I'll go and see him. I'll go now!" she said with determination. "It is a good time, with Aunt Cornelius in New York."

"I think that is the very reason you shouldn't go," insisted Patty.

"Remember your youth, my dear, and don't be too ready with advice. I reckon on second thought that Aunt Cornelius would tell me to give him all the comfort I can. At all events, I am going; and I shall wear my red merino. I hope none of the nasty smells you bring back with you will stick to it," she said hesitatingly.

"Shall I go, too?" inquired Patty.

"Just as you wish," replied Virginia, with airy indifference, beginning to take off the gown she had on. "I think I might like to have you show me the way," she added. "I suppose I ought to take him something."

"Maria would give you some jelly."

"Patty! To take a man food when he is in love with you! The idea!"

"But, Virginia, he is very, very ill."

"Well, go get a glass of jelly; and I will pick one or two of Aunt Cornelius's geraniums. You may offer the jelly, but I shall give him flowers."

On reaching the hospital, a familiar spot to Patty, although a place which Virginia had hitherto scorned to enter, they met a sight common enough to all who had interested themselves in the sick soldiers, but shocking to the older girl, who had gone thither with no comprehension of the daily chronicle of death those walls recorded. There was a hearse in front of the entrance, and a pine coffin of the rudest description was being carried out. She gazed with fascinated horror on the scene, and read the inscription on the box: "Joe (last name unknown). Wounded at Spottsylvania. Born"—

"Hurry, Patty! This is horrible! I'm choking!" and she hastened within. "Which way do we go now?" she asked, panting, her cheeks crimson. "I didn't expect to witness a spectacle like that. Have many died?" she inquired, as if realising for the first time the dual nature of the war.

Glancing at her with a brief amazement, Patty silently pointed up a long flight of stairs.

The odour of disinfectants increased as they ascended. From some far-away corner came a moan.

"Is Captain Featherstone in a room by himself?" Virginia now asked under her breath.

"He is in a ward, sister."

"I almost wish we hadn't come," she gasped in reply, as they went down a hall and caught glimpses of cots with their burdens of suffering. "How full the hospital is! What if Uncle Rufus were here! What if — Frank Livingston should die in such a place! I wish I hadn't come!"

"We can go back," said Patty, soothingly.

But Virginia kept on, her persistence and pride preventing a retreat, though her coquetry and curiosity were subdued by the sounds and sights on either hand.

Patty now opened a door, and they entered an immense room divided by an aisle leading between two long rows of cots.

The autumnal sunlight streaming through the scantily curtained windows, revealed with disfiguring clearness the shrunken forms, the pallid faces, and scars on cheek or forehead, partially healed or showing red or purple, like an ugly stain, upon sunburned countenances streaked with the pallor of mortal illness or brown and leathery from years of exposure. Some of the men were so closely shaven that their bald heads shone like ivory, and all were clad in the coarse shirts provided by the government. Occasionally there was a slight amelioration in the severity of the scene. One aged man, wrapped in blankets, had been lifted into a willow rocker, the gift of some sympathiser. Beside the cot of a young fellow, a mere boy, was an earthen pitcher filled with goldenrod. But, on the whole, the room looked stern and bleak, the men mature and death-stricken, while the aspect of cleanliness was neutralised by the mingled odours of medicines and disinfectants.

A nurse coming forward, Patty whispered her errand and went on, no modern fear of restriction making her hesitate.

Half way down the aisle, nothing to differentiate him from his comrades, lay the young captain.

He was asleep; and Virginia stood beside him, spell-bound with the surprise and horror of the change. His breath came short and faint. His long hands were so thin that the bones showed in ridges. There were high bony arches over his sunken eyes, and his black hair hung moist and matted over his emaciated temples. This havoc of waste destroyed at once the picture in the Southerner's memory, but stirred in her an unpremeditated womanly solicitude, based, it is true, in her case, on interest in this individual man, but within its limitations as helpful in its impulses as Patty's larger and nobler sympathy, which longed to shelter and alleviate suffering, whether in friend or foe.

While Virginia lingered, afraid to stir, Captain Featherstone opened his eyes, dull and faded almost beyond recognition. She had remembered them as cold and critical, but with a scintillation of mingled admiration and conciliatoriness.

To one under the depression of possible mortal illness, no sight is so ravishing as that of blended beauty and health. The captain's stare grew profound, adoring,— impersonal. The splendid woman bending over him was less a reality than a heavenly apparition.

Awed and sympathetic, Virginia continued to regard him with a heightened colour, a softening expression, and, at length, with a timidity unusual in her, laid the scarlet geraniums upon his breast.

No act could have been more simple, more charming, more full of unconscious surrender. As much as she had been admired, and numerous as her suitors had been, never before had she been the recipient of a gaze common enough to Patty's experience,— a gaze which paid tribute to the alliance of beauty and womanliness alone, and it threw her off her guard. It lifted her

above herself, and began the development of another phase of her versatile nature.

The doctor approached at this juncture, felt the invalid's pulse, and shaking his head warningly, Patty set the jelly on the stand at the head of the bed and beckoned her sister away.

But the sick man had now entered into the blessedness of his reality, and when Virginia took one of his almost helpless hands in hers, a thrilling recognition glowed in his eyes.

The doctor gave the girls an uneasy glance and they withdrew, Virginia gliding between the cots like a splendid cardinal flower, and followed by many a longing, homesick gaze.

She went to the hospital every day till her departure to Washington a fortnight later, and in that brief interval one of the complications of her life occurred. Meanwhile the captain improved in some respects and grew worse in others. A fever set in, and he developed a factitious strength which was both consumed and fed by her presence; but, finally, it kindled into actual vitality.

Various subtle affinities of character and temperament made these daily interviews a series of skirmishes, retreats, and advances. Virginia went home from them, her loyalty for The Cause contending with the dominant impulse of her being, and her affection under the influence of her belief in the fatal nature of Captain Featherstone's injuries. Her coquetry was, moreover, fused with her desire to give as much comfort as possible to a dying man who had made a claim for himself during her passage through the lines. Accordingly, she listened indulgently one moment to his delight in her beauty, and the next held his nervous hand or made half promises which she never expected to be called upon to fulfil, or whispered

assurances not altogether untrue, but by no means charged with the sincerity the invalid put into them. Had he been in health, she would have scorned his love as that of an enemy; but, under the circumstances, the novelty of the situation, a compelling attraction, and fear lest a refusal should suddenly terminate his life entangled her deeper and deeper.

The day she went away the captain lay in a profound reverie, although with the look on his face of a man whose cup of blessedness is full to overflowing. The doctor coming towards night, and finding him asleep, cautiously lifted up an eyelid, and after watching his breathing, walked over to the surgeon. "I consider his chance of recovery one in a hundred, now, and the devil will be to pay with that beautiful Southerner if he should get around. He'll never give her up, and she will hang on to The Cause after it is whipped into ribbons."

"What you say gives me a new interest in the case," replied the surgeon. "Are you doing all you can for him?"

"Everything! He is doing all he can for himself. It has been a case of will more than doctors most of the time. First, he said he had to get well for the sake of his country; and now it is country and a rebel. Another of the queer complications of this civil conflict, isn't it?" and the doctor, laughing softly, continued his rounds.

The departure of the Virginians made a stir of leave-taking with the young people, and among their elders there was a review of the Manners history from the time of Gordon Manners' marriage till the breaking out of the war.

Hannah rode into Mulholland in a spring wagon, rickety, but dapper with a coat of fresh paint Sylvester had given it. Her grief at parting with the only

intimate friends she had was evident and sincere. Sylvester called the night before they went away, and Virginia, finding him tedious, consigned him to Patty. As Hannah had promised Virginia to visit her in future, far-away days, so Sylvester, with some newly awakened power stronger than speech and which Patty felt and believed in, let her know that he had plans and ambitions, and that, if he ever achieved them, he should come South to tell her so.

Old Mr. Manners took the girls to Washington. A week later Colonel Boudinot, whether because he could not stand the lonesomeness of the picket-fence or whether in accordance with his own deliberate plans,—his wife never knew,—informed her that they would go to Washington also, and, if it suited them, spend the winter there, as Mr. Manners proposed to do.

A great unrest settled upon Mrs. Manners when there were no old people for her to feel anxious about, no houses in the country for her to make frequent journeys to; and John, growing more importunate than usual about his father, it flashed upon her that she might just as well spend the winter in Washington as Mulholland. She belonged to the women of the old time who were executive, authoritative, and fertile in expedients within purely domestic limits. She had never taken a long journey without her husband's escort and never reached an important conclusion without his advice. It was several weeks, therefore, before Colonel Manners could send her the necessary directions about closing the house, the disposition of various business matters, and details connected with the journey and her residence in the capital. She and John went away early in December, having for an escort no less a person than Captain Featherstone, still very thin, but perfectly restored to health, and with

leave of absence extending till March for additional recuperation.

Meanwhile Catherine and Mary had not met. But Christmas was drawing near; and Mary, usually as transparent as a mountain stream, was carrying a great burden. When Frank joined Sheridan, he left a letter for Catherine with her, with directions to deliver it whenever the moment seemed propitious. His thought was that his sister might be able to effect an early reconciliation because of his absence, but Mary had let days and then weeks pass. As Catherine had not taken the trouble to seek her, pride, and reluctance to request an interview in which she might hear unkind things said of her brother, kept her away. But a week before Christmas she received a desperate letter from Frank, pleading for some word concerning Catherine. Full of contrition and self-defence, she started out over the familiar path which Catherine and she had trodden from infancy.

It was a still day. The sky was grey and cold. The trees faded into the sky and sounds carried far. There was the taste of salt in the air, and a damp chilliness made Mary shiver. An occasional snowflake fluttered aimlessly.

Mary carried a Christmas present for Catherine under her cloak. Notwithstanding their mutual constraint, she could not let a custom pass which they had both observed from childhood. She wondered with a fear, which was only the dark side of love, whether Catherine would accept the gift.

As she came in sight of the house, it looked formidable to her for the first time in her life. The hip roof made a lowering eyebrow to the brick walls; the half-moon over the front door admitted light to grandeur and wealth of which hitherto she had been pleasantly unconscious. She began to compare the meagre space

around the cottage where she lived with the Schuyler grounds. Everything about Catherine's home was spacious and dignified, and she had a feeling, half pleasurable, half dismayed, that Catherine belonged to the house where she was born and bred. What had Frank to offer her? What had she to offer in Frank's name?

Full of this distrust, yet armed with a subtle beligerency wholly for her brother and family,—for the friendship between her and Catherine had been the most perfect blossom of her restricted life,—she opened the gate, walked up the wide brick path bordered with box, brushed the flakes of snow from her cloak with that pretext for delay which timidity engenders, and then, lifting the brass knocker, let it fall with a sigh of apprehension.

The door opened, and Catherine stood before her, taken unawares by the visitor, as Mary was by her appearance. In that moment of mutual surprise the girls saw each other heart to heart. Catherine shrank back, visibly, for a moment, then held her arms wide open, and Mary rushed to her, stumbling over the doorstep, dropping the china ornament under her cloak and breaking it all to pieces, but reaching the profered asylum of love without apparent delay.

Catherine drew her into the parlour, where, overcome by the unexpectedness of everything, and glad to get back, Mary began to cry.

"What made you stay away so long, Mary?" Catherine's voice was low and gentle, with a note of faltering strength in it.

Dashing away the tears, Mary looked at her again. "Catherine," she exclaimed, "you have been ill! Oh!" And she impulsively drew the letter from her pocket.

Catherine opened it with a deliberation that made

Mary afraid. There were no tears in her eyes when she had finished, but the happy loveliness of her expression was irresistible.

With the old love, unspoiled by reservations, bubbling up in her heart, Mary cried: "O Catherine, there isn't a man in the world worthy of you, not even Frank! But all the same I want to tell you about him; and he is the best brother—and the best son—and—O Catherine, tell me you forgive me for keeping the letter so long. I was too proud and too afraid to bring it before. And I have come to-day because Frank is so unhappy. And he is undergoing such hardships—sleeping on the ground—eating rations! And he has malaria!" she added, as if this were the climax to her heterogeneous statements.

"Poor Frank!" said Catherine; and her voice trembled. "I think—Mary—I was very hard and cold. I didn't know I was at the time." She half smiled. Her smile contained no humour, only a large pity for a crude state of mind out of which she had passed. "I thought—I was upright. I had such contempt for that scene in the pines. It seemed so trivial—so sacrilegious of better things. For a good while, Mary, I was unable to tolerate the—intimate thought of any man; and I felt above the need of friends, even you."

"But you did care for Frank all the time?"

"Oh, yes, of course."

"I told him you did! And he is your ideal?" pleaded Mary, girlishly.

She smiled again. "He is just Frank."

"He wouldn't do so again. It was all Virginia's fault," urged Mary.

"More mine. I used to veil my feeling from Frank. I thought that that was upright, too. I was like to-day. Isn't it cold and grey? Come nearer the fire,

dear." She led Mary towards a settee, where they sat down, the light from the blazing logs on the hearth flickering over their gowns and faces. Mary stole her hand into Catherine's.

And so, sitting together, the girls opened their hearts to each other. And then, O modern reader, then the stately Catherine, being a much loving woman and having no encouragement in her day and generation either in books or public sentiment for absolute standards,—then Catherine, as so many other women have done, and not always with disastrous results, told how she had readjusted the whole situation from a sympathetic point of view towards the man's side, and in some abstruse way, generally acceptable to the strongest men, and chiefly because it is abstruse and so perfectly safe in consequence, had taken upon herself the burden of both Virginia's and her lover's folly, and prayed for Frank, and pined for him, and loved him again, but as a dear human man, beset with masculine infirmities, which it should be her duty henceforth to shield him from—if he ever did come back and still loved her; and, if he did return, she knew, without the waver of a doubt, that his love would be hers, and that all such will-o'-the-wisps as the kiss he gave Virginia, although they might make her very uncomfortable, could not, after all, alter their relation to each other. And—supreme reason with all good, loving women in those days—he was in the army, fighting for his country, for her!

Mary and she talked the morning away, and towards night, when the sun burst through the clouds and a warm south wind blew the chill from the air, she went to the post-office with a letter for Frank; and for the lovers and Mary, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the future and the perils and cruelties of war, peace was in their hearts and good will towards all mankind in their prayers when Christmas dawned.

## XVIII.

THE uncertainties of war pressed on no one more heavily than on Hannah. She had received no second letter to explain her lover's condition or environment. The only alleviation to her anxiety was the fact that Sylvester now shared her secret and endorsed her conduct.

A healthy reaction, however, against their isolation, led the brother and sister to consider how, in time, they might assert their former family position in the community, and wrest from the farm opportunities for education and culture.

In the lonesome month preceding Christmas, when visitors were unthought of, now that the Virginians had gone, they began to renovate the interior of their home and adjust conditions to their mother's rapidly advancing illness. Hannah often felt terror-stricken with the apprehension of bereavement. When the hollow, premonitory wind grieved through the loose windows or under the door-sills at night, sorrow and care shared her pillow. As for Sylvester, whatever his apprehensions, he appeared able to suppress them in ceaseless activity.

The musty parlour, with its ancient cobwebs and dingy furniture, was cleaned, Sylvester shaking the carpet and relaying it, Hannah washing the windows and mending the haircloth. The fireboard was removed, the really fine carving on the high white wooden mantel scrubbed, and a fire kept burning on the hearth. Later, Hannah polished the brass door-knobs and andirons, and Sylvester painted the floor of the hall and rubbed down the mahogany rail of the buster.

The walls of the hall presented at first sight a curious and apparently untidy spatter-work of black and

white; but, on close examination, they exhibited a vast and elaborate design, from which stood forth profiles and full faces of men, women, and children,—some with demoniac expressions, others with innocent, vacuous smiles, and others charged with profound secrets or unsatisfied longings. This hall had been a source of fear and delight to Hannah in childhood. Lately, Sylvester had taken possession of it, when he could get a good light, and had copied some of the most suggestive faces.

It came to pass, therefore, by almost imperceptible degrees, that life in the cement house took on another tone, less harsh, less barren, and that the development of their environment to the best of their ability produced a greater sensitiveness to beauty in Hannah and a growing love of order in Sylvester.

Mrs. Rodman gradually formed the habit of sitting in the now cheerful parlour. One by one her responsibilities fell away or were set aside through that secret relinquishment at once marvellous and instinctive. With the freedom of mind induced, notwithstanding her decline, a look of well-being crept over her, and her children beheld in her a transformation unexpected, pathetic, and illuminating. Hannah would linger in the door and watch her mother as Sylvester would scrutinise the faces on the wall: only the faces that Sylvester studied were, after all, but the work of a human hand, while the one the daughter studied was daily under process of transformation by the touch of an artist whose imprint is the seal of immortality.

The short, dull December days glided away, and Christmas came with nothing to mark its existence in the cement house but the forgotten calendar. The afternoon faded into the short, solemn twilight. The frost etched lace borders upon the window-panes. The cherry-trees rubbed their aged limbs together as

the wind increased, like horses seeking mutual consolation after a long, hard pull. Sylvester returned from looking after the stock, and Hannah "lighted up" early. Mrs. Rodman ate her supper before the parlour fire, and son and daughter carried their own table in beside hers. It was a cosey, intimate scene, suggestive of indefinite repetitions.

The cold and wind without made the inside comfort more evident; after a while Hannah sat down with her sewing, and Sylvester read aloud to his mother.

At seven o'clock the sound of bells joyfully ringing became clearly audible, and Hannah dropped her sewing to listen.

"We don't often hear the Mulholland bells as far as this," said Sylvester. "I wonder what they are ringing for?"

"Why,"—and Hannah smiled in wonder over her forgetfulness,—"why, it is Christmas! What heathen we are! But I am better than I seem, mother," she added, laying a caressing hand in her mother's lap. "I have a present for you." Leaving the room, she soon returned with a pot containing a rose-bush in full bloom.

"See here! I hid it in the cellar after the roses began to open, to keep them back till Christmas. And to think I forgot it, and Christmas, too, after all!"

Mrs. Rodman asked to have the pot set in her lap and she held it there, smelling the flowers, touching them as if they were little children, and listening to the bells. "I wish we had a piano," she said irrelevantly.

"Why, what would we do with a piano, mother?" Sylvester burst into a hearty laugh.

"I would play on it."

"You?"

She nodded, a furtive smile wrinkling her features at his astonishment.

"Did you ever play on the piano, mother?"

"I used to play on the spinet. It was my mother's, and stood over in that corner when you were a baby. I sold it when I needed money after your father's death, and I haven't had time for a good while to think of it. I seem to see the past to-night as if it were the present." Her eyes wandered around the old parlour.

Hannah glanced around the room, too, with an eerie sensation. She stirred the fire and turned the wick of the lamp higher.

"The wind is rising," said Sylvester, "and there is a shutter loose somewhere. This house will keep me tinkering all winter, I expect."

"It is well built," said Mrs. Rodman, with pride. "The beams are of extra thickness. The floors are all oak floors. Whatever your grandfather did, he did well. I came here a bride. I hope you will want to stay here after I am gone."

She talked on, telling them many things they had never known before, and much about their father, whom they did not remember. It was later than usual, therefore, when she asked to be taken up to bed. It had been Sylvester's habit, recently, to carry her up.

Hannah ran on ahead to set a lamp on the landing half-way up the stairs. The faces on the wall seemed to start out and stare at her. Placing the lamp in its nook, she hastened up the remaining stairs to her mother's room. On opening the door, a terror seized her, indescribable, convincing. The fire on the hearth had sunk to a mass of coals. The bed in readiness for the invalid showed white and inviting.

At the foot of it, cloud-like, diaphanous, and melting into nothingness while she gazed, appeared to stand a military figure, unlike her lover's and unknown.

Sylvester came in with his mother, and Hannah returned trembling for the lamp. Below her in the

hall glided several men and women; but, while she looked, they faded into the wall. She rubbed her hand across her eyes, doubting the evidence of her senses, and tottered upstairs.

"Mother felt the cold air in the halls," said Sylvester, as she entered. "It has given her a turn with her heart."

Mrs. Rodman was sitting in an arm-chair, panting for breath.

Hannah loosened her clothing, and supported her with pillows, while Sylvester brought the usual remedies.

"I have had a strange feeling — all day — that it was nearly — over," said the invalid. It seems as though so many old friends — dead and gone — long ago, were around me."

"Sylvester, go for the doctor. Go to Mulholland just as fast as you can!" said Hannah.

Mrs. Rodman dissented. "He couldn't help me. I want — you — both — here. It won't be — long." She sank into the pillows, and her head settled upon her shoulders with the adjustment of exhaustion. "You are good children," she said after another attack of spasmodic breathing, "such — good children! God bless you."

Hannah attempted to give her a stimulant, but she turned her head aside. Presently, fumbling with her hands, she looked around in amazement. "I — can't see! Give me your hands."

Kneeling beside her, son and daughter took her worn hands, the feeble blue fingers closing over theirs with a faint pressure, the last effort of maternal love.

"Mother!" cried Hannah, suddenly, with a dry, choking sob,—"Oh, my mother!" for the clasp of her hand relaxed and the light of affection faded from the whitening countenance.

The bustle and excitement incident to effort known to be futile followed, and then Hannah, now fearless and self-contained, insisted on Sylvester going to Mulholland for the doctor. "There is no use in it," she added sadly; "but we shall want to think we did all we could."

"You won't be afraid?" he asked, his voice husky and tender.

"Afraid — with mother!"

He went out without further comment, and Hannah soon after heard the clatter of his horse on some flagging in front of the house. Then a stillness such as she had never known or imagined before invested her surroundings.

Sylvester had placed his mother on the bed, and, as Hannah sat beside her, she was conscious of no busy play of memory, yet memory was busy; and time challenged her with a new sensation of change and strangeness, as if it were she, and not her mother, who had died.

It was long after midnight before Sylvester returned, and meanwhile Hannah had performed her last loving offices. The doctor said the usual and necessary things,—that he had expected it at any moment, and that he could have done nothing further if he had been on hand. The prosaic commonplaces were comforting, notwithstanding, although he hastened away as if he did not care to tarry longer than possible in such a lonesome, isolated place.

Sylvester went out again at daybreak to attend to the stock, and Hannah sat down once more beside that still presence, while the grey dawn slowly filtered in. When the sun rose, a long yellow beam fell across the bed. A mellow, summer-like radiance softened everything. There was also a warm, exquisite sense of companionship in Hannah's heart. She felt in a

natural relation again to time, but united by a sense of companionship, ineffable, reassuring, comforting, to eternity. It was as if she had become assured once for all of her mother's resurrection to her, and spirit-life, visible or invisible, lost its terrors. Closing her eyes, she marvelled over this strange, blissful, unforeseen experience, and while hugging something between sensation and perception, or above both, to her heart, waited.

But she had received all that was to be vouchsafed to her, and presently a perfectly natural realisation of human loss opened the fountain of her tears. Her crying spent itself, and the recollection of Sylvester's weariness roused her to the thought of breakfast and the multitude of details to be attended to. She started from her chair, moved about the room absent-mindedly for a minute or two, looked out of the window on the shorn fields, and lingered once more beside her mother.

A marvellous change had taken place in the countenance from which only a few hours before life had vanished. A look of submission, wonder, and satisfaction had dawned there, blended with an expression of smiling, radiant sweetness and amazing information. What authority had her mother recognised? What had she learned? What interpretation of her disappointing life had been vouchsafed? Whom had she met? Through whom had she awakened into the new life—satisfied?

## XIX.

WHEN Marcus Haldane thrust his head out of the hollow log where he had lain concealed, after his second exit from the mine, he heard nothing except the faint rustle of the leaves and the hum of insects. An apparently impenetrable wilderness closed him in on all sides. Convinced, finally, that he was the solitary occupant of this wild and forbidding spot, he crawled out and stood upright. A bird warbled joyously, and he thrilled with the thought of freedom. Although stiff and weak, he plunged into the forest at a venture.

Pushing his way through the underbrush, he came at length upon an apple-tree laden with fruit, standing beside the ruins of a cellar, sole vestiges of a former clearing. Near by was a little stream, trickling from a bubbling spring. Perceiving by this time that his vitality was inadequate to long-continued effort, he gathered some pine boughs for a bed within convenient distance of the fruit and water, and during the day, with the thought of its possible future need, made a satisfactory examination of the mine entrance by which he had escaped.

The cool, free air, and the hope of soon communicating with Hannah, were so soothing that towards sunset he fell into a profound sleep which lasted into the night. Nothing remained for him to do, therefore, but to wait till daylight before proceeding further.

It was still early when he started. In a little while he came out into a wild glen, through which roared a brook swollen by the recent storm, its sides stony and precipitous and covered with a forbidding growth of bristly chinkapins, pines, and junipers. Clumps of sumach reddened the sombre green. The

leaves of the blackberry, already nipped with scarlet, gave him a keen perception of the nearness of autumn. A narrow but well-worn path edged the brook, but its frequent turns and the near growth of the forest contracted his view. Above the belt of sky overhanging the gorge sailed a hawk.

The path continued on and on without a branch, the region apparently as sylvan and deserted as other portions of the surrounding country. At length, just as he had decided to crawl up the bank into a clump of hazel for rest, he beheld, still some distance ahead, a bridge spanning the gorge, and, to his infinite relief, realised that he was doubtless near one of the great turnpikes of Virginia. Jubilant in the thought that he had left the mine behind him forever, he clambered to the hazel copse and ate a hearty lunch of apples, after which, as it still wanted an hour till noon, he lay down to take a short nap.

When he awoke, the gorge was in shadow, the wind was blowing a gale, and here and there a lofty tree tipped with sunlight along the sky-line showed that the day was nearly gone.

Refreshed and strengthened by his nap, and reflecting that on a turnpike he might make better and safer progress by night, he started down the scraggy descent, the stones rattling after him, and hastened forward.

The path soon began to climb the side of the glen, but was so obscured by a thicket of underbrush and vines, as well as shaded by a nobler growth of trees, that Haldane was surprised, notwithstanding the length and difficulty of the ascent, when he abruptly reached the level. At his left was the bridge, and in plain view for a considerable distance was a turnpike. Not a house was in sight; not a cultivated field was to be seen. A bird crooned, and the wind sounded hollow and lonesome.

He started up the road, his ears alert, his vision quickened by his solicitude. He passed a deserted house, its broken windows, its ragged fences, and an intrenchment near by revealing that here, too, the desolation of war had been known. By the time the last ray of daylight disappeared, he felt as if he were the only human being in the world,—a world ruined and cursed by universal carnage. His back ached excruciatingly, but he plodded on. The young moon had set, but the stars were brilliant, and he could see near objects with distinctness.

Towards midnight, he came alongside of a white board fence which extended for a quarter of a mile and terminated in a gateway, although the gates were gone, and strips of grass growing in the drive, dimly visible, foretold another ravaged and abandoned homestead. Walking up the drive, he intended, if he found the house empty, to effect an entrance and gain a few hours' rest; and came out in front of one of the old manor halls of colonial Virginia. Although showing traces of the wanton destruction of raiders, it retained the general aspect of a venerable and stately dwelling.

Haldane felt like a thief as he stole forward; but, on gaining the broad porch, all sentiment of unlawful intrusion vanished. The double door stood wide open and a pile of débris half choked the entrance. A long shutter lay upon the piazza floor, and a rat scuttled across his feet.

Stepping into the hall, he stopped again to listen. No sound except the wind broke the oppressive silence. He opened the doors on his right and left; and, although in the prevailing obscurity the rooms appeared furnished, something vacant in their very atmosphere gave him the courage to light a candle and make sure of his surroundings.

It was a house of many rooms. On every hand in

those deserted chambers were evidences of the occupancy of one family for generations. Heavy pieces of furniture were still in place,—great oak and mahogany bedsteads and wardrobes with mirrored fronts, before which the soldier paused, amazed at his gaunt, unkempt aspect, and realising for the first time the wasting effects of his illness.

Everything that could minister to bodily comfort had been taken or moved away. The carpets were gone; there was not a vestige of linen anywhere; but full-length portraits and costly paintings in huge gilt frames seemed to accost the young man with the mockery of family grandeur and the special appurtenances of luxury and refinement.

In a small room in the attic he found a ragged mattress, and, locking himself in here, threw himself down on this miserable bed and slept again far into another day. So profound had been his sleep that for a moment, when he awoke, he could not remember where he was; and, until he could recall the events of the night before, his confusion was further increased by the sound of loud, coarse laughter and the hum of a babel of voices. Looking through the closed shutters, he perceived a swarm of negroes surging in front of the mansion, and piles of bedding, cooking utensils, and food deposited in unsightly heaps under the great beeches. A cart, followed by a rickety family coach, came up the shady drive, and presently out of both vehicles poured coloured people of every age, each with his contribution to the booty.

As Haldane continued to look, it dawned upon him that these were the same men, women, and children whom he had known in the mine; but their aspect was so different in broad daylight, and their animal spirits so high under more favourable conditions, that the slowness with which he made this discovery did not surprise him.

Judith now sailed down the wide steps of the porch and went from group to group of the new-comers, inspecting what they had brought.

The sun was setting, and its golden light covered the big spaces under the trees, touched the coffee-coloured skins of the mulattoes with rich, warm tints, and brought out a satin lustre in Judith's jet-black waving hair. She trailed a magnificent yellow silk gown over the grass, and her majestic figure displayed this finery to advantage. Evidently, she was in good humour, for she had a word or smile for each of the wizened mammies and grotesque children.

A smell of cooking scented the air. In a few minutes, supper was spread on the lawn, and the hungry soldier found himself going through the movements of eating with sympathetic appreciation, as he watched the old women pick the chicken bones or stalwart darkies wander through the grove with a biscuit in one hand and a piece of meat in the other. Here was a caravan of wanderers who knew how to extract food from an empty, harrowed land; when its original proprietors were often at a loss to obtain the most ordinary means of subsistence.

After a while the men began to carry the heaps under the trees into the house, while Haldane made up his mind that Moses and Judith must have selected this deserted and isolated homestead for their next halting-place. Nothing remained for him to do therefore but effect his escape as speedily as possible, and creeping out of his room, as being more or less exposed, he concealed himself behind a heap of rubbish under the eaves of an open attic to wait for a favourable opportunity. His hiding-place contained a small window commanding the front of the house; and his hearing, rendered unnaturally acute by his underground confinement, enabled him to judge to some extent of the movements of the

negroes. After an interval of comparative quiet, during which his thoughts wandered to Hannah, the mournfulness of his reverie was interrupted by a distant roar, sounding at first like the wind and then like a prolonged cry of agony, but proving, as it drew near, to consist of confused, hilarious shouts.

Screened by the half-open shutters, Haldane ventured to lean out of the window, and beheld a crowd of men and women waving torches and brandishing bottles of all kinds and descriptions. They had discovered the wine cellar; and already on the damp, twilight air floated the penetrating fragrance of champagne.

The troop surged out of sight, but the soldier could hear them on the porch and through the house. The noise, varied by the shrill laughter of women and frequent wails from the children, increased to a bedlam as the orgy proceeded.

Hours passed. Haldane grew cramped and nervous with waiting; but it was not until he saw a faint glimmer in the east and knew that in another hour it would be broad daylight, that the noise subsided, the flicker of light on the lawn faded, and the revellers relapsed into profound silence. Waiting a quarter of an hour longer to feel sure that they were asleep, he crept from under the eaves, and, reaching the attic door, listened again. There was not a sound, except somewhere below him the heavy, stertorous breathing of intoxication. He began to descend the stairs. Half-way down lay a child of two years, its woolly head resting on one step, its little body curled up on another, and odorous of brandy. In the hall was a mother with her baby, the infant clutching at her breast and whimpering, the mother snoring out a drunken sleep. Through the open doors of the once stately chambers, in the dim light of the dawn, he saw promiscuous heaps of hu-

manity on the beds, on the bare floors, in the corners; and everywhere were the sickening, intermingled odours of stale wines and spirits. Although nerved for an emergency, he was still weak; and he turned faint from the foul air. But there was no time to lose, and he started down the main staircase, conscious, notwithstanding the intensity of his watchfulness, of the look of the green grass through the open door and the rustle of the wind in the beeches.

While lingering with his hand on the baluster and peering stealthily, he heard a soft step, and Judith appeared. Her yellow gown was torn and stained, her handsome hair was frounsed, her eyes heavy with debauchery. But, in all that motley, ill-assorted tribe, she was the only one in whom vigilance, after all, triumphed over stupor. For a moment, on her subtle, sphinx-like face superstition struggled with recognition. Her reason triumphed; and, half-intoxicated as she was, she realised that the soldier was alive.

"What yo' a-doin' spyin' on us hyah? How'd yo' git out dat mine?" She stepped forward, and laid a hand on his arm; but, flinging it off, he ran across the porch and darted down the drive.

She raised a cry; and almost immediately the house was in commotion, the eternal fear of a subject race at once dominant. Several men started in pursuit.

Haldane was still following the drive, when along the turnpike he heard the clatter of horses' feet, and knew by the sound that a considerable body of cavalry was near. Rushing among the trees and hiding in a copse of hemlock not far from the gateway, he saw a squad of Confederates advancing towards the west.

As they approached his place of concealment, they halted and scrutinised their surroundings.

"It is the Loveland property," exclaimed the commanding officer, "and abandoned, like most of the

others around here, apparently. We might ride in, though, and see."

"The old general used to have a famous wine cellar," said a florid, white-haired man. "He took me down there once to show it to me. It is in a queer, out-of-the-way place; but I think I could find it. These September mornings are bad for fever and ague."

"Go ahead, boys. If there is a drop there, we will have it, and make it right with the general later," ordered the officer.

They turned into the drive, and, as they passed the hemlocks, one of them prodded his bayonet between the branches, giving Haldane a thrust through the shoulder. "Out of that! Did you think I didn't see you?" and dismounting, his example followed by others, they hauled the soldier forth.

The sight of a gaunt, sick man was too familiar to arouse sympathy, and after a few questions, to which he gave answers sufficiently misleading to conceal his identity, although unsatisfactory to the officer in charge, he was ordered to march beside them and consider himself a prisoner.

"Poor white trash!" observed the rubicund epicure, his eyes sparkling in anticipation of the wine cellar. "He looks starved and sick enough to die. We shall have to drop him before night."

"We'll search him later," said the colonel. "He doesn't talk like a Southerner, and he may prove an important prisoner."

Stunned by this crisis in affairs, Haldane retraced his steps up the drive, and meanwhile attention was diverted from him by a skirmish between an advanced body of the cavalry and his pursuers. Aware of the uselessness of further concealment,—for he had cherished a faint hope that the negroes might prove equal

to this emergency also, and disappear,—he decided to announce himself a Union soldier.

Of a stoic and fearless nature, he watched further proceedings with much curiosity. After his experience in the mine, his ideals concerning the blacks had received a rude, if temporary, shock. He had found them possessed of a strange jumble of the most distorted ideas, available neither for confidence nor safety. Instinct had led Judith to nurse him, and nurse him well; but instinct, however kindly, is more or less barbaric. And, when their own safety was concerned, Moses and she, with the facility of change peculiar to children, had become his enemies and abandoned him to his fate. With all their virtues, they did not possess sufficient stability of acquired character to judge his capacity for gratitude and take the risk of his defence at the expense of their own. He did not condemn them, but, on the contrary, found himself hoping that in some way they could extricate themselves from what promised to be a pitiable situation.

When the soldiers reached the front of the mansion and saw the broken bottles and believed the chief object of their visit was frustrated, there was no temporising. Most of the men were shot, after a feeble and futile effort at defence. The women and children were scattered like vermin, with the exception of Judith and a few others who were made prisoners, to be left at the first plantation where they could again be forced into service.

The good humour of the cavalrymen, who were on their way to join Early in the Shenandoah Valley, was restored after the affray was over by the discovery that there was still liquor enough for their amplest wants and sufficient food for them to swell to a very respectable extent the provisions they were attempting to collect on a march through a region so starved and de-

pleted that they had begun to doubt their ability to gather even a scant supply for their own needs.

So prompt was their action that in a very brief time they were once more mounted. The prisoners rode the horses which had been picketed by the negroes under the trees. The booty was piled into the carts that had brought it thither so recently, and the order to ride given.

Haldane rode beside Judith, and there was protection in his eye, if not in his hand, which she saw and wondered at. Now and then she was the subject of jeer and comment from the soldiers; but they were on a serious mission, and, refreshed by the unexpected abundance of food and stimulants, they advanced rapidly along the turnpike to Orange Court-house, and thence to Culpeper Court-house, their course carrying them from this point over South-west Mountain. Half-way up the mountain, they encamped for the night; and the negroes were at once set to work to fetch water, gather dry brushwood for a fire, and make beds of pine boughs for the officers. Judith boiled the coffee and fried some ham, her mien apparently submissive and humble. She was worn out for want of sleep, and her yellow gown, slashed and torn by the soldiers who had vied with one another in spoiling her finery, hung about her in rags. Arms and neck were bare, and the gold hoops in her ears, the satin smoothness of her skin, and the lustre of her magnificent hair gave her a barbaric splendour in spite of her fatigue and tatters. No fear saddened her immobile features. She had never known the fear that the free woman would have felt under similar circumstances, and she accomplished her work with the slow, stolid manner of a being destitute of inherent executive capacity.

Haldane wondered at her facility for self-suppression; and a great pity stirred him — the pity he would

have felt for a captive animal that had escaped and been caught again. He carried a pistol he had found in the mine and, when Judith brought him some supper after the soldiers had eaten theirs and had scattered in groups to play cards or tell stories around the fire which the cold night made welcome, he slipped it into her hand. It disappeared as if by legerdemain, concealed somewhere about her ample person; and she flashed upon him an inscrutable look of gratitude. Later in the evening, procured by some subtle process of filching, she brought him a flask of brandy, and the stimulus imparted sufficient warmth to his numb and weary body to enable him to fall asleep.

At daylight the company was again in motion. Haldane mounted with great difficulty. The wound in his shoulder, although slight, had been roughly and imperfectly bandaged the day before and soon caused him the most excruciating pain.

Far ahead rode Judith, hobnobbing with one of the officers, to all appearance a woman of the camp and contented and hilarious.

Haldane wondered what had become of Moses, and if his wife knew whether he were dead or alive, and speculated on the impossibility of one social stratum penetrating the real life and secrets of another.

On the second night, the turnpike which they had followed proving unobstructed, they reached Swift Run Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The new moon was now several days old and, as they ascended the pass, Haldane was cheered and inspired by the grandeur of the landscape. In every direction spurs of noble, wooded hills closed in the view, or, suddenly opening, revealed glimpses of the tidewater country which, seen under that beguiling light, showed no trace of the horrible conditions that had turned the eastern counties into one vast intrenched battle-ground.

The forest was full of the whirring hum of katydids and the trill of crickets. Occasionally a brook, gurgling over a rocky bed, added to the peacefulness of those night sounds which close the summer in the Atlantic States.

It was midnight when a point in the pass was reached where the party could diverge with safety for a last encampment before hazarding a junction the next day with Early's army.

The pickets went on duty, and the tired soldiers lay down, their tattered blankets inadequately protecting them from the frosty coldness of that mountain region. They were a brave, uncomplaining, sunny-hearted set of men; and Haldane felt the bracing contact with military life, even under such adverse circumstances. There was the thrill also in his veins due to the hope that some unexpected chance of war would restore him to the Army of the Potomac. Moreover, he could only account for his retention, instead of being left at the military station where most of the negroes had been dropped, by the supposition that he was to be exchanged. He had gathered from the talk of the Confederates that Sheridan's forces far outnumbered Early's; while from a copy of the Richmond *Whig* he had picked up, he had read General Grant's letter of instructions issued to General Hunter before that officer relinquished his command in favour of Sherman, "to push up the Shenandoah Valley, and leave nothing to invite the enemy to return, to take all provisions, forage, and stock wanted for the use of his command, and to destroy what could not be consumed."

He knew, therefore, that he was on the eve of stern sights, sterner conditions, and surprising changes.

At midnight he awoke with a violent start to find Judith bending over him. No precautions had been taken to secure him on account of his evident weak-

ness. But within his wasted frame there was a greater store of vitality than his movements and appearance would indicate, and he had remained passive because he judged his greater present safety lay in a military escort imposing no painful restrictions. Judith's whisper electrified him; and sitting up, he looked eagerly around to assure himself that the soldiers were asleep. The camp-fire still burned, and warmed by the cheerful heat, beyond the pale of which he was shivering with cold and excitement, the groups of men were snoring or lying in motionless repose. There was no other sound except an occasional belated chirp from a katydid, and once the cracking of a piece of brushwood under the step of the picket on guard. The guard was a light one, and stationed at the east and west approaches to the pass. It was an easy matter, therefore, for Haldane, under Judith's directions, to creep into the forest, whither she presently followed, and where they were met by a half-grown coloured boy who led the way in silence.

After an hour spent in pursuing a rather devious and toilsome walk through woods where there was a close growth of underbrush, they came out on a narrow, stony path which soon began to descend the mountain. At daybreak they reached more level land, where Judith, who again wore an air of authority, ordered a halt, dismissed her guide, gave the soldier breakfast from some provisions tied up in her bundle, told of Sheridan's victories, and disclosed her purpose to reach his camp. A little farther on she procured a rickety wagon through the magic charm of a gold dollar in United States currency, and towards night they came to the Shenandoah.

The river was fringed at this point by a dense grove, and having paid her driver, Judith sat down under one of the trees, apparently absorbed in watching the rat-

tling vehicle disappear from sight. In the interval the short twilight perceptibly faded, the mist began to ascend from the river, and a funeral stillness intensified by the acrid odour of recently extinguished fires, made the hour and the scene sombre to the last degree.

Haldane felt a sense of mortal weariness and a wondering perplexity that in a land where confusion, destruction, arson, and murder had become the rule, he had the courage to make further effort. But this frame of mind vanished as quickly as it came, and, at Judith's word, he followed her into the grove.

It was a spot with which she was apparently familiar, although she looked astonished when they emerged upon a mass of smoking débris and the fire-stained, fallen walls of a brick house. The evidence of a recent and extensive fire, the absence of all signs of life, and the melancholy of the hour gave the soldier the gruesome feeling of the observer on a deserted battlefield, a feeling further increased by the deep reverie into which Judith fell.

He finally roused her. As she looked up, her expression in the dim light was melancholy, grim, meditative. "Marse's ole home!" she said briefly. "I wuz sold away f'm hyah ten yeah ago. H'm, h'm! But we ain't got no time to lose." And leading the way to the river, they hurried along its edge by a narrow path, much grass-grown, to a fancy little boat-house which was uninjured. She felt under a stone and found a key, and almost before he was aware Haldane was lying in the bottom of a small boat while Judith was rowing with long, measured strokes.

With all her faults and vices, she seemed to him like a great rock in a weary land; and as he lay there, faint with his wound and the heroic, protracted effort he had made, considering his strength, he no longer

had a doubt of her ability to conduct him safe within the Union lines.

Above them shone the stars, vying with the half-moon in brilliancy and clearness. The deepening blue of the sky as well as the cold night air made the summer seem far away. The moonlight touched Judith's yellow satin gown and it shone like gold. As she bent to her oars, she cast upon Haldane a look that was full of racial motherhood. The boat drifted with the current into the middle of the stream, and here, the distance from the shore doubtless making her feel safe, she began to chant in a low, musical, throaty monotone,—

“ When you see de stahs a-fallin’,  
Een dat day, een dat day,  
O sinnah, why will you die  
Een dat day ? ”

As Haldane lay there, listening to this and other pictures of the day of judgment, the wash of the oars, the moan in her melodious voice, and the otherwise vast, embracing silence made him feel alone with his Maker in a singular and indescribable sense. He fell asleep.

When he awoke, the boat was moored in a cove under some willows, and Judith lay in a heap at his feet, her head against the tiller, one arm shading her eyes. He was not sure she was asleep, for a look of vigilance and self-reliance clothed her massive features. The dawn crept over the river, and, as the water took on the varied hues of the dappled sky above it, she sighed and sat up.

She again provided Haldane with breakfast, after which, leaving the boat, they struck across a burnt track towards a turnpike running on the west side of the Shenandoah. The air was pungent with smoke,

while the mountains towards the east and north were hidden. They came upon many smouldering ruins. The hazy wall shut them in closer and closer. All the fields were bare and black. There were no fences, no barns—no homesteads. Everything had been devoured by the flames except here and there patches of woods in which the green leaves glimmered in a sickly, unreal way as they approached. But, even in the woods, trees were burning; and if there had been a drouth, nothing could have saved these bits of forest.

For a long time they met no one. They seemed sole and forlorn possessors of a devastated, ravaged region extending for miles. But towards noon, while they were halting beside a creek which crossed the road, and which they would have to ford to continue their flight down the valley, there came out of the smoky, yellow fog on the other side a wailing call, growing clearer and clearer as they listened. “Prepare ye the way of the Lord—prepare ye the way of the Lord—whose fan is in his hand—to purify—to purify the nations!” The voice was high, thin, penetrating, and keyed with the thrill of agonising pathos.

The day had grown warm, but Haldane shivered under the spell of that call. The effect on Judith was marvellous. She looked around on every side, as if expecting to see the cloud-like barrier encompassing them rent by supernatural agencies. Suddenly she began to sway and wave her arms and sing, her voice ringing out bell-like, solemn, sonorous,—“De jedgment day is a-rollin round! Oh, de jedgment day is a-rollin’ round!”

The voices blended, separated, each refrain heightened by the other; and presently on the opposite bank of the creek a feeble old woman issued from the smoke, leading by the hand a bent and very aged man. His

white hair was thin and long, his blue eyes shone with a frenzied light, his lips looked parched and scarlet; and he kept on crying without ceasing, "Whose fan is in his hand!"

Judith and Haldane forded to the other side and began to ask questions, Judith relapsing almost instantly into a natural state of feeling and demeanour on perceiving the tottering and decrepit couple.

The old woman appeared almost as crazed as her companion, whose wailing never faltered; but they finally extracted from her the fact that the entire region within an area of five miles had been burned, as well as some general idea of the forces in both armies.

"We're beaten all to pieces," she said distractedly. "Winchester's taken, Fisher's Hill is taken—every thing is in confusion—we don't know where we stand. The villages may belong to us in the morning, to the Yankees at noon, and to us again at night. I heard a man call this turnpike a race-course for armies; and it's true,—true as gospel!"

"Prepare—prepare!" cried the old man, tremulously.

"I don't know what to do with him," she continued. "He is all broken up with sorrow. We lost both our boys at Vicksburg. Sheridan has taken our horses and sheep; and last night everything we had left was burned—the barns, the house—everything."

"His fan is in his hand!" said the old man, warningly.

"Where are you going now?" inquired Haldane.

"Nowhere. We haven't any place to go to. We're wanderers on the face of the earth. Oh, dear! oh, dear!" and, wringing her hands, her sunken, bleared eyes filled, and she began to cry.

The distant tramping of feet broke upon their ears. With a look of terror the old woman dragged her

forlorn companion after her, and the smoke swallowed them up.

Judith raised her head like a hunted deer scenting the breeze, and seizing Haldane's hand drew him away to the right of the turnpike.

Late in the day they came to a hilly country, and here, while walking fearlessly along a sequestered country road, a locust hedge alone prevented them from being discovered by a dozen men in grey who were threshing wheat on a barn floor. Others were grinding flour, and others still were patrolling, watching for Sheridan's ubiquitous cavalry; for, wherever the Confederates moved, this terrible leader's riders moved, eager to pounce upon their foe.

During that fatal autumn of 1864 much of the bread for Early's troops was obtained in this manner. While some of his men were fighting, others were grinding the meal for the next day's rations under the protection of armed comrades.

Judith and Haldane crept into the woods near by, and, impressed with the general insecurity of the whole country, hastened to reach the foothills of Massanutten Mountain, a long range midway between the extremities of the valley, and washed on the west by the north fork of the Shenandoah and on the east by the south fork.

Once safely in the recesses of the mountains, Judith's anxiety to press forward relaxed. Towards midnight she knocked at the door of a log cabin and was welcomed by a coloured woman of great age who soon prepared a comfortable bed in one corner of the room where Haldane lay down, exhausted with fatigue, excitement, and physical suffering. The next morning Judith disappeared, and Haldane found himself unable to rise.

The negress dressed his wound daily, gradually nurs-

ing him to a degree of vigour he had not possessed since his injury in the battle of the Wilderness.

October came, with early frosts in the mountains, but Judith had not returned. Haldane, still very weak, sat in the door of Hulda's cabin, watched the incessant, noiseless fall of the yellow and crimson leaves, felt the stir of courage and patriotism, and made up his mind to take his fortune into his own hands before the month was much older.

Meanwhile Judith had been neither idle nor faithless. She came back on the 10th with news that Sheridan had left Woodstock and moved further down the valley. Her dress was that of a Southern mammy, and her long apron and turbaned head so transformed her that her tragic dignity was softened and humanised. She had remembered Haldane's needs as well as her own, for she brought him fresh linen, army shoes, and the complete outfit, in clothing and weapons, of a Union captain. Her pride was immense over his astonishment and joy; and although he gave a passing thought to the original owner of garments much too large for him, his sense of personal identity, which life in the mine had almost destroyed, returned with his rehabilitation.

Judith insisted on waiting three or four days longer before starting forward, declaring that she needed rest; and in this interval Haldane and she made a contract. She solemnly promised to guide him safely within the Union lines, while he on his part agreed to use what influence he could to obtain a sutler's commission for her.

"Don't you think you had better go North, Judith?" he asked, while they were talking over their plans. "If I once reach our army, I think I can get you through."

She shook her head with leonine gravity. "Don'

want anyt'ing to do wid de Norf till Richmond's taken.  
If I jine Sheridan, I'll git to Richmond to'ds spring.  
He'll git through ransackin' dis region by dat time,  
shore."

"But what would you do in Richmond?"

"Jine Moses."

"What?"

She smiled, her teeth as shining as the hoops in her ears. "Did you t'ink dose Confed'rites killed Moses? He's under a charm. No one cyant eber kill Moses. I've heerd f'm him. He's safe in Richmond, long ago. You mus' a' t'ought I wuz a ve'y griebin' wid-dah."

She laughed, and Haldane laughed; and after that he refrained from offering her advice.

She at length declared herself ready to start; and they set out, pursuing a route near the summit of the range. The leaves were thinning, and they obtained views of cabins and clearings completely hidden earlier in the season. Occasionally they would emerge from the forest on some bold table land affording a magnificent prospect of the entire length of the valley, with the two branches of the Shenandoah skirting either side of Massanutten, the continuous range of the Alleghanies, hazy, graceful, and devious in outline, on the west, and the noble and wooded crests of the Blue Ridge rising on the east and spreading out into a bewildering and broken succession of peaks towards the south-west, where the lofty mountains of southern Virginia and Tennessee culminate in Mount Mitchell. From "beloved and much suffering Winchester" on the north, to Staunton on the south the gracious valley lay open, its once opulent surface bathed in a sea of autumn haze, through the azure veil of which the ravages of war were imperceptible. The church spires, dimly visible, the clustering villages, cheated Hal-

dane's imagination with dreams of a past whose elements of beauty, dignity, and abundance were to make a tale which would sound like a romance to the grandchildren of men living in the valley at the time of Sheridan's raid, the like of which had not been known in history since the desolation of the Palatinate in the seventeenth century.

Judith's pilotage was so leisurely that her companion became impatient. The weather grew warmer; and on this account, as well as on the plea of greater security, she insisted on long rests till late in the evening. There was a growing moon, and as each stage in their progress brought them not only nearer the Union army, but in view of frequent detachments of Confederates, her caution was not unreasonable, and Haldane, though reluctantly, acquiesced.

Sheridan was in camp at Cedar Creek at the point where that stream enters the Shenandoah. His army was flushed with their defeat of Early's cavalry at Tom's Brook; while the Confederate leader's forces, many of them valley men who had witnessed the destruction of their homes and farms in the great raid, were profoundly disheartened. But, like the heroes of Valley Forge, though starvation stared them in the face, they still clung to a desperate cause.

The position next taken by Early was a masterly one; for he returned to the fastnesses of Fisher's Hill, the scene of his recent disastrous defeat and one which only a consummate general would deliberately have chosen a second time.

On this spur of the Massanutten range, along the crest of which Haldane and Judith were drawing nearer and nearer to both camps, the thrice defeated but tireless general overlooked his opponent's position and crouched like a panther waiting to spring. So reduced were his forces, so scant his supplies, so near to star-

vation was now the surrounding population, that Sheridan believed Early had no other resource than to withdraw from the valley and leave this long-contested approach to the North permanently open. But, although the Shenandoah Valley as a storehouse of food for Lee's forces at Richmond was effectually destroyed, Early had still a work to do in holding back till the last moment Sheridan's army from swelling Grant's besieging thousands south of the Confederate capital.

Matters were in this condition when Haldane and Judith, a little after midnight, on the 18th of October, approached the north end of the Massanutten by a rugged path skirting the edge of a precipice. Their footing was so precarious that they frequently pulled themselves along by means of trees and bushes. They came out at length on a bold spur. Although it was lower than Three Top—a wooded mountain with three peaks, on one of which was Early's signal station—they could overlook both camps. The scene below them was bathed in brilliant moonlight, and Haldane could see the two branches of the Shenandoah, the triangle made by the junction of Cedar Creek with the north fork, Strasburg just west of this point, and, a little further beyond the pretty village, the white turnpike running almost due north to Winchester, twenty miles away. In the nearer foreground were patches of woods interspersed with open country and the tents and defences of the two armies. It was a memorable sight, and the quiet which reigned enabled the soldier to look down upon it as if it were a panorama of conditions which had already become history.

A few hundred feet below him was a detached body of Confederates, evidently asleep, from their general disposition. But, while Judith and he were studying the situation with a view to their further progress, a

movement began among these soldiers, and the spot which but a moment before had seemed so dead became alive. The troops formed into columns which marched stealthily away, and the camp at their feet disappeared as if by magic. On Fisher's Hill, opposite their point of observation, the fugitives next perceived the massing of artillery.

Meanwhile the Union fires towards the north-west burned undisturbed, the three ridges on which the Union soldiers lay encamped showing no indication of fear or disturbance. But, while those thousands slept, along the base of Massanutton stole Confederate infantry and cavalry, hoping to gain their rear; and the artillery waited only for a signal to clatter down the turnpike and cross the ridges. Two divisions of infantry advanced, one creeping over Hupp's Hill, where General Crook's men still slept and dreamed of home, the other seeking Cedar Creek, six miles away, to flank the Unionists and fall upon their camps at daybreak.

The hours passed; and still Judith and Haldane, too far away to warn the Unionists and unable to proceed without risk of capture, watched these eventful movements. Towards morning a thick fog engulfed the two armies, shut out the moon, and put an end to their observation.

Sheridan had gone to Washington a few days before for purposes of consultation; at this critical moment, therefore, his command devolved on General Wright. Early's need of supplies was so well known, and his occupation of his mountain fastness had been so quiet and so secret, that among the various divisions of the Union army on that night of the 18th of October belief was general that he had retreated, starved out, up the valley.

But before it was broad daylight, and while darkness and fog encompassed him, the eagle flew from his

eyrie, the panther sprang from his lair, and Hupp's Hill, the ridge on which the foremost Union division was encamped, was flanked by Confederate infantry. With a battle-yell which told the Unionists of their delusion, the infantry swept forward, and the army which had conquered at Winchester, at Fisher's Hill, at Tom's Brook, became a mob. The Nineteenth Corps, so victorious at Winchester, melted away like snow. The brave Sixth Corps yielded ground, and then retreated: it gained a second position, and again, for want of support, retreated. From east and west the Union army, surprised and conquered, fell back towards the turnpike and started down the valley in the direction of Winchester.

Right in the track of the worn and starved Confederates were the abandoned Union camps, rich in food, stimulants, and booty. Fifteen hours of marching and fighting were behind them, a fleeing, disorganised, and bewildered foe in front of them. Close at hand was everything necessary for comfort and warfare; clothing and knapsacks, small arms and camp equipage—all kinds of booty dear to the soldier's heart. The temptation proved irresistible. The men whom Kershaw and Pegram, Wharton and Gordon had led to victory, broke ranks and began to plunder; and meanwhile, the indomitable Sixth corps, halting to the north of Middletown, formed again. Other bodies of Unionists coming up, and finding themselves languidly pursued, took heart, the mob yielding to the habit of discipline; and General Wright was able to rally his scattered forces.

The fog had lifted. The Union generals could look back over the five miles between Strasburg and Middletown, where they were re-forming. They could see the inefficiency of Early's cavalry, the slackening vigour of his infantry, and perceiving that the moment

was ripe for plucking victory from defeat, they massed their divisions on the turnpike with faces towards the enemy.

As the day advanced and the firing grew more distant, Judith plunged into the forest, and, making a detour to the east, brought Haldane triumphantly to a sheltered point within a half-mile of the army. He crept forward through the bushes, and, as he came nearer, and heard the broken, hurried rattle of the artillery, and saw the cavalry galloping to the north and huddled masses of infantry running hither and thither, he realised that the surprise had been complete, and that the brilliant army of the Shenandoah was routed. A burning energy swelled his veins and choked his utterance.

He began to run. Ploughed land, fences, hills, offered no impediment. His feet were wings. But one thought animated him — to plunge into the midst of those scurrying fugitives, re-form a squad of them, and face about.

As he approached the turnpike and perceived that an effort was already being made to mass the troops for action, the air towards the north was filled with cheer on cheer, and, looking in that direction, he saw a cloud of dust far up the road. It whirled along like a cyclone, and out of it tore Sheridan, ubiquitous in the battle of the Wilderness, accompanied by a score of cavalrymen. Behind him ran the swelling volume of the returning drift of his army, cheering when his terrible oaths broke over their heads, hurrahing when he declared he never expected to know the meaning of defeat.

Eleven and a half miles rode Sheridan from Winchester, whither he had returned that morning from Washington. As he came near enough to see General Wright, with a sturdy following of veterans drawn up

in line of battle, he shouted, "What troops are those?" and a hundred voices rang back in reply, "The Sixth Corps!"

With a terrific oath, he cried in a jubilant voice, "We are all right!" and striking spurs into his black horse, grey with dust and flecked with lather, its distended nostrils clotted with blood, he swung his old hat in the air, galloped along the line, and sung out "We'll whip them yet! We'll whip them yet! We shall sleep in our old quarters to-night, boys!"

The men threw up their bullet-pierced hats, leaped and cheered; and hundreds who were retreating an hour before fell into the ranks.

Haldane, meanwhile, had caught a riderless horse, and spurring towards Newtown, which the foremost fugitives had reached, by a flaming enthusiasm of voice and manner he succeeded in forming them into a company and leading them to the front.

When Sheridan in riding along the lines came opposite Haldane, he saluted. For an instant, the dashing general, who supposed him dead, looked dazed, and then, recognising the living reality and grasping the probable situation, cried out "You're all right! Major Haldane is all right! Ride with him to victory, boys!"

Thus briefly did Captain Haldane find himself promoted; and Sheridan in honouring him was but fulfilling the spirit of Grant's instructions, "to give command to officers in whom he reposed confidence without regard to claims of others on account of rank."

Haldane thought of Hannah; for, although the title by which the general had addressed him had no official importance, he knew it meant that his name would be forwarded to Washington, and that his promotion was only a question of routine.

## The Grapes of Wrath

Late in the afternoon, flanked by the cavalry whose overwhelming numbers Early had dreaded from the beginning of the campaign, the Union line advanced in the terrible half-wheel which had rolled its flaming spokes at Winchester and Fisher's Hill. Man and horse were one in the swing of Sheridan's majestic cavalry. When their riders cheered, those warrior beasts gripped the bit, laid back their ears and screamed. Their blood-shot eyes glared in response to the flash of the sabre, and the nearer the heat of the action, the steadier and more redoubtable they grew, as if they had their own honour to defend by victory.

The Confederate ranks broke before the furious onset of Sheridan's riders. The Sixth and Nineteenth Corps swept them up the turnpike down which they themselves had retreated in the morning. Like foam in the wake of a paddle-wheel, screaming shells, rattling musketry, and the cheers and yells of thousands resounded in the wake of that living wheel rolling over the remnant of an army which one short month before both North and South had regarded as invincible. The campaign in the valley of Virginia was ended.

## XX.

SHORTLY after the battle of Cedar Creek, Hannah heard from Haldane, and, until a few days before Mrs. Rodman's death, his letters were frequent and regular. He wrote to his mother, after his promotion, declaring his intention to marry Hannah, if his life were spared. Mrs. Haldane was too fond of her son to oppose him in the midst of the terrible uncertainties of war, and sent an indefinite but conciliatory reply. She paid Hannah a condescending call on the day Mrs. Rodman died. The young girl could not decide whether this was her method of acknowledging the engagement or whether some impulse of youthful friendship had stirred her.

In their bereavement, Hannah and Sylvester found themselves the recipients of much kind attention from the whole neighbourhood, and the good influence of it was reflected on all concerned. It was one thing for the community to look furtively at the brother and sister as they drove into town, and exchange remarks upon the way the Rodmans had "gone down," and another to gather in the old cement house and realise that, unchangeable as conditions had appeared there, the great and inevitable change had come. Men wandered out to the barns, and, with the quick perception of thrift and sympathy, saw that Sylvester was now doing the best he could; and women who would have been shocked if accused of curiosity found their way pretty well over the house, and made an inventory rather favourable than otherwise to Hannah and her mother. While they felt desolate and bewildered, the brother and sister perceived with mournful satisfaction that they were a real part of an old neighbourhood hanging on to its traditions.

The day after the funeral, Mary and Catherine hav-

ing driven over from Mulholland, the girls clustered together around the fire in the parlour, partly because it was so cold and partly because of the lonesomeness and emptiness of the house at such a time. The visitors talked in low tones, Hannah sitting between them, and each friend held one of her hands. They were handsome girls, with that look of high breeding less the outcome of opportunity than the result of three or four generations of civilised self-restraint in one form or another. Their lives had flowed in narrow channels; but they had intense convictions on morals and propriety, and just now they all felt very tender.

By imperceptible degrees the conversation drifted from sorrow and death, and they began to talk of the promotion of Frank and Marcus — for news had arrived of Haldane's advancement, and the same battle had made Frank a first lieutenant — speech and look indicating that they hugged the glad sense of importance women delight in when their men are coming to the front.

Hannah was invested with a new dignity to Mary as the betrothed of Marcus Haldane, for she had just told her precious secret. Girls who knew Mary well, if they cared for her at all, loved her extravagantly. She lived in her brothers and for her brothers, and as a result cherished a profound sense of the superior worth and excellence of men. An engaged girl, to Mary, was very much more of a girl than an unengaged one; and yet, strangely enough, she never seemed to think that she herself could attain to this state. It was doubtless the hearty way in which she entered into the joys of other girls, and with an artless spontaneity — really her tribute to men in general — sympathised with their raptures over their lovers, that made her so much beloved. And now Hannah felt the charm in which Catherine had so long been enveloped by Mary;

for Mary invested Haldane with so many sterling qualities of mind and heart, saw his manliness, fine looks, and heroism in such an accurate, clear light, that, as Hannah listened, she wondered how she could have been blest with the love of such a man and still have pursued the even tenor of her way so long. And, when the trio having said all that could be said of the major, the lieutenant became the theme, a disinterested listener would have found it difficult to tell who loved him more, Catherine or Mary.

Hannah asked the girls to stay to tea, but they refused, and presently Sylvester brought their carriage to the door.

The change in Sylvester Rodman during the past few months, if subtle, was great, and Mary, with that perception, half instinct, half intuition, the possession of the most highly gifted women in relation to men, noticed it. Unlike many men of unusual size, he appeared to Mary endued with power of various kinds. As he took her hand, there was a dilation of her eyes, a loveliness in her smile, with the same purity and sweetness which made Patty's charm, that led him to turn and look at her, even while he talked with Catherine. He smiled and Mary smiled, and from that moment they were warm friends, with a great faith in each other.

Hannah kissed the girls good-bye again at the door, and kept wiping the tears away silently as Sylvester tucked in the robes, and brother and sister stood with arms around each other till the carriage was out of sight. The sun was setting, and the pines against the sky towards the east looked like a sable fringe. The fences were grey and naked, and the ground was frozen hard.

"How changed it all seems!" Hannah leaned her head on Sylvester's shoulder.

"Yes, with mother gone, it seems as though the bottom had dropped out of everything. Come into the house, Hannah. You are shivering from head to foot."

After supper the young man drew some letters from his pocket. "These came two or three hours ago. I forgot all about them." He shuffled them over and gave two to Hannah, the first of which proved to be from Colonel Boudinot, while the other looked so strange that she kept scrutinising the envelope instead of opening it to discover the writer.

The letter from Colonel Boudinot was a very fatherly epistle, and included one from Mrs. Boudinot, in which she urged her husband's invitation to Hannah and Sylvester to spend a month with them in Washington.

"I haven't anything to wear, to begin with," Hannah said, as Sylvester seemed to nurse the idea of acceptance.

"I wouldn't let clothes hinder me from doing anything I really wanted to do," he urged, with a straightforward, surprised stare at her.

"I am not thinking of the clothes on my own account so much as for the Boudinots," she replied.

"Do you think a hundred dollars would fix us both up?" he asked ingenuously.

She put her arm around his neck, laying her head against his with a little sigh and a faint smile. "I don't believe three hundred would. We're both of us ragged and patched from head to foot. Nobody need know the full extent but ourselves, if we stay at home. You had better answer the letter, Sylvester. Let Colonel Boudinot see that there is a man in this house, too."

He flushed at this back-handed compliment, but said that for some time to come it would take more than letters to convince anybody of that.

Hannah kissed him again, assuring him that she didn't believe she ever could have lived through the past two months if she hadn't had his sympathy and strength to lean on.

"The invitation is beautiful and most generous, and I wish we could go," she said meditatively.

"But we can't, and that settles it," replied Sylvester, with great firmness. "All the same, I wish we could go somewhere,—to some place where we could get used to living without mother." He folded his arms on the table, and, burying his face in them, broke into dry, spasmodic sobs.

"Sylvester!" Hannah silently stroked his hair as she stood beside him, her slender figure, in its worn black dress, mingling with the half-lights in the old parlour where only a week ago they were all sitting together in a kind of fancied security. The curve of her forehead was still childlike; but her pathetic, serious, tender eyes lent a premature maturity to her face. If her expression had not been womanly and sweet, the finely chiselled lips would have looked too stern, although her mouth and her buoyant, erect carriage gave her a natural and impressive dignity.

Sylvester drew himself up presently, with a man's shame over the manifestation of emotion, and then, as if this sorrowful digression had not happened, read aloud a couple of letters, in which both were concerned.

Hannah now remembered her own unopened one, and, tearing the envelope off, uttered an exclamation of surprise and fear; for out of the folded sheet slipped the photograph she had given Haldane when they parted, and which was to be returned to her only if he were desperately ill or dead. She unfolded what she supposed was a letter; but the page contained nothing but a printed heading, "Gordonsville," and a rudely

scrawled line, "Tuk f'm de cap'n arfter he wuz shot. Moses Plumdiddie."

She turned the paper over and over, held the photograph close to the light, and scrutinised every spot and imperfection.

When at length she laid the picture on the table, the colour had left her face, while her dilated, staring eyes were those of a person mortally hurt.

"He is dead! My soldier is dead!" She walked up and down. Suddenly, with a moan, she threw up her arms, and would have fallen, had not Sylvester caught her.

Never in all his life, not even in the solitude which he had so often sought and loved, had he felt so alone as he did at that moment. Not a soul within call, not a house even in sight,—and a winter night, and a new sorrow blotting out a great one till that moment too sore and tender to be much talked about,—Hannah lying there in his arms with the white, still look which had seemed so terrible on his mother's face. "Hannah isn't dead! Hannah isn't dead, too!" he kept saying to himself, or as if speaking to some invisible presence.

He opened her dress and dashed water in her face, trying all the various expedients he had watched her resort to with their mother, and after a long time she opened her eyes, looked wonderingly and vaguely at him, and sat up. "Is Marcus dead?" she asked in a soft, suppressed tone.

"No!" replied Sylvester. "Of course he isn't. You and I will go and find him."

"Alive—or dead!" she replied, but in the same unnatural, whispering voice.

"We shall find him alive. Somebody who had no business with it got hold of that picture, as you will see. I don't believe he was shot."

His confidence reassured her a little. She began to plan.

"There are the two hundred dollars in mother's bureau," continued Sylvester. "And there are the horses,—good saddle horses, both of them. We could ship them from Trenton to Philadelphia, and from there by the Baltimore & Ohio to some spot in Virginia; and we'll scour the whole State but that we will find Haldane!"

"But what could we do with the house?" asked Hannah, with the querulousness of a person recovering from shock and magnifying the minor consideration.

"Never mind the house," exclaimed Sylvester, impulsively, all on fire with the desire to comfort her.

"But the stock!" she added, rousing herself to greater clearness of voice and look.

"Oh, the stock!" For a moment he was perplexed. "I will tell you what we can do as well as not! Why, if we had gone to Washington, we would have had to make some such arrangement. There is Tommy White out of employment, and too sick to work a whole day, if he had the chance. There is nothing particular the matter with him, only he is feeble. He'll be glad enough to come here and stay to look after things, just for food and shelter. And the place is good for that, I think." Sylvester looked about the room as if it contained everything pertaining to the farm within its four walls.

"We had better see Mrs. Haldane, and find out if she has heard anything since I saw her. Oh, if she has heard from him!" Hannah clasped her hands, the imagination casting a gleam of joy over her face.

They didn't look much beyond childhood as they sat side by side on the haircloth sofa, making their plans,—the plans themselves almost Quixotic in the uncertain and perilous condition northern and central Virginia

was still in. But Sylvester argued that the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, though torn up and unused during part of the war, had recently been repaired, that there was no active campaigning in the eastern section of the State north of the James, and that he was enough of a woodsman to trace any route, however devious. With boyish confidence he assured Hannah that there was nothing like being on the ground and finding out for one's self the worst or the best. And Hannah, active so long, and always for some one else, felt as if she could hold her terrible fear in suspense if she was really trying to find her lover. If worst came to worst, they could, in an emergency, go to Colonel and Mrs. Boudinot for a few days; for was not Virginia on the very threshold of Washington?

Thus, with the sublime ignorance of people who have never been fifty miles from home and the sublimer audacity of youth, they perfected their plans, and went to bed with a more natural feeling, after all, than they had had since Mrs. Rodman's death.

Early the next morning Sylvester invaded the dignity and grandeur of Mrs. Haldane's establishment, only to learn that she had not received a line from her son in three weeks; but she had had no anxiety, she said, as she thought he was probably off with a division to break up one of the railways south of Richmond, and such attempts were not attended usually with much danger.

"I think he is somewhere north of Richmond," said Sylvester, decidedly.

"But he can't be," replied Mrs. Haldane, "for Grant's entire army is now south of the James."

"Well, there are skirmishings going on all over the State," Sylvester insisted. "Whoever found that picture got possession of it at or near Gordonsville, I believe."

Mrs. Haldane, deeply influenced at length by his suggestions, began to weep; and the young man left her in this condition to go to see Tommy White. Tommy was ready and delighted to take charge of affairs; and thus in twenty-four hours after the receipt of the mysterious letter the brother and sister, secretive concerning their intentions, were ready to start.

Meanwhile Mrs. Haldane had regained her wits, and after spending a day in mourning began to think of telegraphing to Washington to start a train of official investigation such as only money and influence could effect. In her own anxiety she entirely forgot the Rodmans.

As Hannah had resolved to confide in Mary and Catherine, Sylvester drove her into Mulholland the night before they went away. Mary was so astonished at what seemed to her the audacity and futility of the scheme that Hannah's courage secretly faltered, and while in this frame of mind she gave Mary permission to write about the journey to Frank.

"Frank, you know," said Mary, "might have heard something about it; for he went across the Blue Ridge, not long ago, with General Merritt."

"Do you suppose he went near Gordonsville?" asked Hannah.

"I haven't any idea where Gordonsville is. They were in Loudon County, burning barns and mills and collecting stock," she continued, instantly diverted to her brother; "Frank wrote that they took about four thousand sheep, a thousand hogs, hundreds of cattle, and five hundred horses. To pay them back, Early tore up some of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad."

"The Baltimore & Ohio!" exclaimed Hannah, in dismay.

Mary got a map, and, finding that Loudon County was considerably north of Gordonsville, Hannah felt

sure that Lieutenant Livingston could be of very little use; but Mary, with an oracular look, said she was convinced that in some way Haldane's fate hung on her brother. Hannah kissed her.

At this juncture there was a loud rap on the front door. A neighbour on his way home from the post-office had stopped to leave a letter.

Mary tore it open hastily when she saw that it was from Frank, and, running her eye over it and finding that her brother was well, began to read aloud his account of Sheridan sending General Torbett with eight thousand cavalry to attack the Virginia Central Railroad. "Oh, listen!" she exclaimed. "'Merritt's division,'—that is Frank's, you know,—'Merritt's division is to march through Chester Gap towards Gordonsville.' There now! What did I tell you? I'll write to Frank before I go to bed."

Hannah did not very well see how Frank's advance could relieve her immediate situation, but at least the letter served to make Gordonsville a more tangible reality; and, finally, when she left, it was settled that Mary should watch for any Virginia letters that might come for Hannah and forward them to Frank with instructions.

"I suppose our way will clear as we go along," said Hannah, with an effort to be brave; "I don't believe any letter will come for me, though. If I did, I wouldn't go." She kissed Mary once more at the door; and Mary, with the lamp held high, and making a dazzling spot of light in the universal darkness, watched her hasten down the narrow path to the gate.

Her call on Catherine was brief, but encouraging; for Catherine assured her that she was acting in the only possible way under the circumstances, and there was a longing in those lovely blue eyes that let Hannah measure the patience of Catherine's waiting.

Hannah cooked the last breakfast Sylvester and she were to eat in the old cement house for many a week with an eerie feeling. It was bitterly cold. The windows were covered with frost. When Sylvester came in after feeding the stock, his face was blue from the exposure.

There was a streak of daylight along the horizon, but the stars were still shining brightly when Tommy White brought the horses around to the door. A valise and carpet-bag contained their wardrobe, and these Sylvester attached to his own saddle.

Once on her horse, it seemed to Hannah as if half her apprehension was lifted; she started down the lane with a sweet, reasonable anticipation of cheerful possibilities surprising to herself.

They waited at Trenton several hours for a train; when they were at last on board, Hannah fell into a heavy and refreshing sleep, from which she did not wake till they reached Philadelphia. Towards night of the next day, as the Baltimore & Ohio was still blocked because of Early's raid, they mounted their horses again, and began a long ride, broken by frequent halts, but lasting over a week. At the end of this period, life seemed altogether changed: the world they had hitherto lived in had vanished. War, which they thought they had appreciated in its awfulness, kept looming before them in more gigantic proportions; and their possessions, which had appeared so meagre when they left Mulholland, had increased a hundred-fold in their estimation, for their house, their barns, their land, were in a region where law and order still prevailed. They belonged to a state untouched by raiders; their fields had never known the tramp of armies; their cattle and grain were not threatened by the need of starving soldiers.

Although they were many miles further south, the

landscape continued a disappointing surprise, for, with the naïveté of untravelled Northerners, they had unconsciously expected that the word "South" meant everywhere verdure, flowers, balmy breezes, and a tropical look in January. But instead Virginia was as bleak and wintry as New Jersey. The streams were covered with a thin coating of ice. Patches of snow lay along the hillsides, and the numerous pines and oaks cheated them with the fancy that they were in their native forests.

They had been singularly fortunate thus far in escaping and avoiding the small bodies of troops of both armies moving hither and thither through the State during the early part of the winter; but they had now reached a section where the evidences of ruin and desolation were everywhere visible, and where they began to realise that they might have some difficulty in obtaining even a night's shelter.

Although Hannah had learned to ride along by Sylvester's side almost mechanically,—for she had found him as unerring as a compass in following routes described to them from one stopping-place to another,—she was recalled to a consciousness of her surroundings late one afternoon by an exclamation on his part, followed by a sudden halt.

The day was almost gone and a wild scurry of windy clouds was piling up rapidly in the north. They were on the edge of a broad and much swollen stream, spanned by a bridge the floor of which was completely burned away. The blackened skeleton still reached from shore to shore,—a mute witness of what had taken place on most of the main-travelled roads of the state. There was no house in sight. The fields showed a weedy autumn growth, now dry and rattling in the rising wind. On one hand a near forest was already blackening in the declining day; while on the other,

looming sullen and desolate against huge masses of purple and slate coloured clouds, were distant mountains.

"This turnpike leads due south to Orange Court-house, and we might have slept there if it hadn't been for this bridge."

"We passed a wood road not long ago," suggested Hannah.

"But who knows where it might lead to, in this waste! It is the only thing to take, however, as we haven't passed a place where we could stop since noon."

They rode along the creek a short distance; but plainly, as far as the eye could reach, there was no possibility of fording it. Turning around, they galloped back to the wood road and halted again, impressed with their forbidding surroundings.

The sun, half swallowed up by the clouds along the horizon, cast a red and angry light over the vapoury film on the mountains. The wind, laden with dampness and cold, soughed drearily through the pines. The ragged, grey bark of a clump of shell-barks showed ghastly in the sombre yet fiery glow of the sunset, and far within the woods gleamed the white trunks of birch-trees.

Sylvester thrilled with the mysterious beauty and solitude of the forest. "The woods seem alive, Hannah, don't they? As if they had something to tell us. But come on! It is too late to stand here a moment longer." He touched his horse, and they proceeded down the road over which the bare arms of the trees met in a lofty fretwork of arches and intersections. A bush growing in the track now and then whipped against Hannah's skirt, while the mottled bark of sycamores obtruded fantastically in the gathering gloom.

It began to rain, the drops freezing as they fell;

and, if the road had not been wide and the moon at the full, so that their way and the sky, notwithstanding the increasing storm, were illuminated by a weird greyness, they would have been obliged to stop.

"Where do you suppose we shall come out?" whispered Hannah, after they had ridden an hour, with no signs of house or clearing. "What if we ride like this all night?"

"I have done it, many a time." Sylvester suddenly threw up his cap, and caught it as it fell.

Hannah saw that the hour, the scene, the wildness of their surroundings, exhilarated him; and she had a sense of his self-restraint during the last few months, as well as a fear that this search for her lover would undo the good accomplished. She could only vaguely discern his features, but she felt his elation.

They rode on, the silence intensified by the varying gale, the soft cracking of the film of ice under the horses' feet and the stealthy patter of the rain. Ahead of them in a straight line, unbroken except for a gentle decline or rise, stretched the arched opening made by the road. But, gradually, the universal harmony of rainy sound was invaded by a harsh and intermittent rattling. It grew steadily louder. Almost before they could understand the situation a body of soldiers mounted on artillery horses filled the farther space, while several galloped rapidly forward to meet them.

Sylvester's first impulse was to urge his sister to dash into the woods; but there was a high undergrowth, and the unknown nature of the country deterred him.

The blood thrilled through Hannah's veins; and, before she had time to lose a feeling of heroic resistance to danger, they were surrounded.

Under the fire of questions, they managed to tell their story clearly and simply; but, to their astonishment, when it was completed, a roar of laughter greeted them.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded Sylvester, with a burst of indignation, while Hannah sat her horse with the erectness of an Indian, her flashing eyes holding at bay a soldier who peered curiously into her face.

"Oh, you're a couple of babes lost in the wood, that's all!" said the commanding officer. "So you expected to find this Major Haldane, did you? Why, man alive, you might as well look for a needle in a hay-stack! There are thousands of missing soldiers. And what are you doing on this stretch of road, anyhow? Don't you know it is called Purgatory?"

"I thought it was hell when I saw you," retorted Sylvester, with an irritated impetuosity that made the men roar again.

"What'd you leave the turnpike for, if you want to go to Gordonsville, eh?"

"The bridge is down," replied Hannah, in a clear, resolute voice. The refinement of her tones produced a momentary silence. The man who peered into her face drew further aside; while the officer in charge, astonished at the information, commanded a couple of soldiers to ride ahead to prove the truth of it, and ordered a halt to rest the horses. The company were artillery men from the Shenandoah Valley, bringing their worn-out and underfed horses across the mountains into a region poor enough, but able still to supply them with fodder till the opening of the spring campaign.

After some further questioning, the couple were allowed to proceed, with directions which enabled them an hour later to clear the woods and strike another turnpike leading by a very roundabout way to a town several miles south of their destination.

"My advice to you, Orlando Furioso," cried an elderly man, with a hoarse chuckle, as the wanderers

started, "is to keep clear of Gordonsville. Lomax was there about Christmas time. Torbett has been there, too, and seized all the cattle. You won't find anything to eat. And Grant, they say, is beginning to point his telescope at Gordonsville. You'd better go home as quick as you can." A dozen voices now struck up, "We won't go home till morning, we won't go home till morning"; and to this music, accompanied by a harsh clatter of guns and sabres, Sylvester and Hannah rode away with much curvetting and prancing on the part of their frightened horses.

The main road upon which they at length entered was as solitary as the woods from which they had emerged, and they proceeded as fast as they could urge their weary horses forward. Towards midnight the rain ceased, the clouds parted sufficiently to let the moon sail out and in,—a fantastic object, spotted and blurred or covered with black, windy masses. But the air became milder, the clouds finally scattered, and over them soared a splendid arch of dark blue winter sky, studded thickly with stars.

They were now on the top of a considerable hill, while below them, free from ice, rolled a broad, full stream. Some distance from the farther shore, and on a commanding knoll crowned with gigantic, scattered trees, they saw a house and lights twinkling in the windows.

"Do you think they would take us in?" inquired Hannah, as they started down the hill, her voice faint with fatigue and a fast unbroken since morning.

"We'll try if we can get across. Hallo, here is a bridge!" cried Sylvester, as a slight turn brought them in near view of one, its sides broken, its flooring patched, but evidently in constant use. "We can get there in ten minutes now. Something appears to be going on up there, but no matter."

Hannah's skirts were heavy with rain. The water still dripped down her neck. The exhausted horses hung their heads as if there were no hope left. No sorrier-looking people, certainly, could have besought food and shelter; but the utter misery of their plight supplied them with courage and confidence.

As they began to ascend the knoll which proved to be far more extensive than it appeared at a distance, they came to a private entrance, and struck into a winding road which lengthened the distance. But, finally, when it led out into an avenue of oaks, among which gleamed the house, Hannah checked her horse. "This place looks exactly like the home Patty has described to me so often, Sylvester. Oh, what if it should be her home!"

Forgetful of cold and wet and hunger, the brother and sister studied their surroundings. They were now but a short distance from the mansion, and the moon lighted up its entire façade. They could see the broken railings of the piazzas and other evidences either of ruin or vandalism; although the light within and without softened everything to such an extent that much that they really did perceive they suspected to be the delusion of fancy or desire. While they lingered, a mixture of romantic hope and fear detaining them, a door on the upper piazza was flung open, and a young woman came out, who looked down the valley. She held a white shawl about her shoulders, but Hannah could see the diamonds flash on her bare neck. In the same instant she fancied she recognised Virginia, and her heart gave an exultant throb of joyful relief.

The travellers had halted in the shadow of a tree; but all at once Virginia—for it was, indeed, she—discovering them, waved her hand radiantly, disappeared, and a minute later stood on the steps of the porch below, her face wreathed in smiles of welcome,

a look of pride and exultation bringing her great beauty into bold relief.

"She thinks we are some one else," said Sylvester, as they advanced; and this proved to be true, for a frown of surprise, mingled with fear, crept over her countenance as they came nearer.

Hannah called almost with a sob, "Virginia!" and, Sylvester riding forth into the moonlight, the young Southerner recognised him with amazement. The door of the mansion was at this moment opened, and Patty, dressed, like Virginia, as if for some special occasion, looked out, while over her shoulders peered the shining face of their coloured mammy.

"It is Hannah Rodman and her brother," cried Virginia, who had flown down the steps. There was a momentary hubbub of questions and explanations as the travellers were welcomed into the house, Sylvester's offer to lead away the horses on seeing the old coloured woman take them meeting with a peremptory refusal from Patty.

It was nearly midnight; but there was a table set in the great dining-room, whither Virginia conducted them immediately on learning that they had fasted since morning, and proceeded to serve them herself. Although the meal was limited to hot biscuits and milk, the array of china and silver was elaborate. At first Hannah was too tired and overjoyed to perceive the situation that revealed itself; but gradually she became painfully impressed with the incongruous elegance, forlornness, dilapidation, and barenness of her surroundings. She saw, too, that preparations were in progress which their arrival had interrupted. There was an alertness in Virginia's expression, a tension in Patty's eyes, which led her to acquiesce eagerly in the proposal to go upstairs. Virginia herself showed the way; and it was with considerable pride and a grand

air that she led Hannah into a large room, handsomely appointed, for the bareness of downstairs was not in evidence upstairs. With a profound sympathy born of years of pain in which she had seen her own home pilfered, if not by raiders or negroes, yet by the inexorable thief of time and penury, Hannah threw her arms about Virginia's neck, kissing her with the same intimacy of affection she had hitherto lavished on Patty.

Virginia coloured, warmed to her, and broke down. "It is home," she said, dashing away a tear,—"the home of our fathers! Patty and I gave Uncle Jared and Aunt Anne no peace till they brought us back here. Father has consented to let us stay; for he thinks the war is ended, so far as this section is concerned. And now I must go; but you are welcome, Hannah, to share what we have—as you let us share your home and you. Good-night." And Virginia, kissing her, withdrew, while Hannah noticed that every possible want for the night and morning, too, had been anticipated. She felt perplexed over the solitude of the mansion; for, as far as she was able to judge, the sisters and their old mammy were the sole occupants. But why were the halls and the great rooms all lighted, and why were Virginia and Patty dressed as if for a party? A benumbing fatigue, the reaction due to warmth and food, stole over her; and glad and thankful that she was under a friendly roof, if only for a night, she let the matter drop, and went to sleep.

Meanwhile affairs of much moment were in progress downstairs; for Virginia had hardly left Hannah before the trio was again at the door, and this time watching the approach of several men on horseback. They rode up in silence. The officers dismounted, their attendants leading the horses immediately out of sight. With a suppressed cry of gladness the girls rushed forward and embraced a tall, white-haired man. The

next instant they broke away from their father; and, as if conscious of courtesy, Patty turned timidly and reverentially to another white-haired man, while Virginia, dramatically kneeling, seized his gloved hand, and kissed it. "Welcome once more to Oakhurst, dear General Lee," she whispered. As the kindly, grave, but tired soldier looked down upon her, the brilliant moonlight revealing the lustre of her black hair, the adoring tenderness in her velvety eyes, and the splendid curve of her shoulders,—bare according to the winter and summer house fashion of the day,—she seemed to chase care and fatigue from his expression, and he assisted her to rise with an elegance and chivalry in accord with the hour and their environment.

With her hand in her father's, Patty led the way into the house, the military escort of the two generals, which consisted of four soldiers, stationing themselves in the hall, on the porch, and at the two approaches to the mansion.

The old coloured woman conducted her master and his guest upstairs, while Virginia and Patty revealed themselves in a new aspect. Doxy had removed all trace of the scanty supper served to Hannah and Sylvester, and Patty now brought to the dining-room various dishes which Virginia proceeded to arrange. When the two generals came downstairs, the savoury smell of roast chicken and the aroma of coffee filled the air.

"I felt bad not to serve the chicken and the coffee to Hannah and Sylvester," said Virginia to Patty, while waiting at the door to receive her guests; "but General Lee is the saviour of the Confederacy, and the saviour must be fed if all others starve. I do hope the things Uncle Jared sent from Washington will get here tomorrow; for, if they don't come, we shall have to live on bread and milk."

When General Lee entered, he gave his arm to Vir-



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ginia, Patty took that of her father, the old mammy stood behind her master's chair; and then in a reverent voice the commander of armies which looked up to him as the strong arm of their salvation implored the blessing of God.

An hour later another company of soldiers rode up; and the sisters were again at the door to admit two more officers of high rank, one of whom was General Early, bringing his report of the disastrous Shenandoah campaign, while the other was General Hood, with his equally discouraging report of defeat in Tennessee.

It was a momentous night for the Confederacy; for these four generals had ridden great distances, relays of horses having been provided for them, so that they might economise their time to the utmost possible degree.

The conference was held in an upper chamber, and, as General Lee crossed a threshold long familiar to him, he turned to General Manners and said: "I have slept on a soldier's bed for many a month, and preferred it to any other; but this room, with its look of a time which I am convinced is never to return, fills me with sadness and a desire to hide here and rest and to hand over my stupendous task to other keeping."

General Manners' black eyes flashed, as he said with devotion of tone and expression: "If you abandon us, our cause is lost. You, and you alone, now constitute the hope of the Confederacy."

A little distance down the corridor, Virginia and Patty lingered, love and wistfulness blended on their expressive features. General Lee, having insisted that his advisers should enter first, noticed the girls, as he was about to close the door, and beckoned them forward. Throwing the door wide open, he ushered them in, saying: "Gentlemen, these women can keep

our secrets as well as we. They have left luxury and pleasure for the sake of their old home. Let us honour them to-night with a seat in our council."

The officers assented; and tears sprang to the eyes of General Manners as he placed chairs for his daughters at the long table in the centre of the room where they sat down, their hearts beating with pride and loyalty over this unique attention.

Many things were talked of by those serious, anxious men. They did not conceal a desperate situation from themselves; and the scales fell from Virginia's eyes.

They talked of Sherman's advance; of the destruction of the railways, mills, and stock in the cotton belt; of the recent capture of Savannah; of General Grant's power to swell his already tremendous army before Petersburg and Richmond by the addition of Sherman's victorious army.

General Hood told of his own failure to force Sherman to retreat from Georgia, confirming General Lee's belief that General Sherman would cut a straight path for himself to Virginia.

The advisability of appointing General Johnston to the command of the shattered army still opposing Sherman's progress was considered; and General Hood suggested that, if the garrisons from the cities on the gulf were withdrawn and added to the corps which General Beauregard had recently commanded, these forces, with what was left of his own army, might successfully hinder the junction of Sherman's army with the Army of the Potomac.

They counted up the actual total such a combination would make; when they realised that it would amount to only twenty thousand men, General Lee raised his finger impressively, and said: "Friends, we may delay the union of Sherman with Grant, but we can do no more. And, if the civil authorities at Rich-

mond would consent to appoint General Johnston, he would be at the head of men so demoralised with being hunted through two States that Sherman would drive them before him again when he got ready to do so. Our prime necessity at present is to keep the Danville Railroad open; to do that, Johnston will have to leave Sherman's path to Virginia more or less unobstructed. Before this winter is over, we shall see Sherman within a hundred miles of Richmond. My own plan, therefore, would be to evacuate Richmond while we can. When Grant and Sherman unite, that opportunity will be forever lost!"

But not only General Manners, but General Hood and General Early also, strenuously opposed the evacuation; and they proceeded to broach a subject which touched both the heart and the pride of General Lee. They informed him that plans were not only in progress, but actually consummated, for his appointment as commander-in-chief of all the Confederate armies.

General Lee regarded his officers for a moment with silent and grateful appreciation before replying with sad and solemn emphasis: "It is too late,—too late! I can advise,—I am willing to do so while there is a particle of hope left,—but, gentlemen, can't you realise that there are no longer any Confederate armies for me to command?"

A thrill of horror ran through Virginia, while Patty sat appalled with the terrible significance of the statement. A profound silence fell upon the group.

"We have only remnants of our once magnificent armies," continued General Lee,—"remnants opposed by a million. We are depleted,—nay, exhausted. For some time we have been filling up our ranks with boys and old men,—with convicts and slaves as well. Is this the stuff that armies are made of? We are the centre of a ring with Sheridan ready to break through

the passes of the Blue Ridge upon us with ten thousand sabres. What have you left to oppose him with, General Early? What, according to your own account, but the shreds of your army, a paltry handful of three thousand men more or less! If he crosses the mountains, he will destroy our railroads, and join Sherman, and both together will unite with Grant. Neither Petersburg nor Richmond, nor Gibraltar nor Quebec, could withstand such an army."

"If you could evacuate Richmond, where would you go, General Lee?" asked Virginia.

"Daughter!" Her father turned sharply towards her.

But Virginia was lost to every consideration but that of the tragic drama unrolled before her by a man who made her forgetful for the first time in her life of her father's presence or admonition.

General Lee regarded her kindly. His cheeks were flushed, his eyes were bloodshot with sleeplessness and fatigue, his lip trembled for an instant with profound emotion. He drew himself erect, suppressed a sigh, and spoke with deliberation and calmness, although in the tone of a man who despairs of carrying his point. "I should do one thing, and only one. I should take what forces we have left in and around Richmond up into the hills and mountains." He waved his arm towards the Blue Ridge. "In the mountains I could defy Sherman, Grant, and Sheridan combined till we subdued the spirit of the North or aroused all Europe in our behalf. Once in the mountains, I could make Grant stretch his lines so far that they would break with their own thinness, and give ourselves a line of retreat at any moment into Tennessee or still further South. In the mountains I should be in a position to gather to myself the entire military force of the Confederacy. With the mountains for our fortress, we

could hold out indefinitely. But I stand alone in my view of such a change of base; and the Confederacy, like the Union, shapes its policy according to the will of the majority." He clenched his hand on the table, moving it restlessly back and forth; and the sinews stood out tense and white.

Over Virginia's face as she listened there had crept a clear light of conviction, through which showed a remarkable self-poise and dignity. There was something martial, yet womanly in her bearing; but gradually her colder expression yielded to one of love and sympathy, and, bowing her head upon General Lee's hand, she wept softly.

For a few moments her repressed sobbing was the only sound. She raised her head presently, her liquid eyes mournful and impressive.

"Who shall keep you from the mountains, General Lee! Who can keep you!" she added with musical vehemence. "The very women could help you in the mountains!"

"One woman like you would make a host, Virginia!" exclaimed her father, warmed by her loyalty. "To prove my faith and pride in you and Patty as daughters of a race of Southern warriors, I declare you shall come to Richmond and help your mother and all of us with your sympathy and courage as long as Richmond is the beleaguered stronghold of the Confederacy. We are not going to lose our peerless capital, General Lee. Our women will be safe there as long as the James flows into the Atlantic, and far away be the day when we or they shall need to seek the mountains. As desperate as our cause is, my faith remains entire in the final triumph of the Confederacy. As dark as things are, I believe Almighty God above will never suffer us to see shame and defeat in Richmond."

In his effort to encourage General Lee, General

Manners argued himself into a more sanguine frame of mind than he had felt in weeks.

A cock crew. General Early opened one of the blinds, and saw an edge of light along the horizon.

Virginia and Patty rose, and General Lee conducted them to the door. As he ushered the girls out, they were chiefly conscious of the commander-in-chief of their armies, although this office never officially belonged to General Lee until almost the close of the war.

"I could die for him,—die for him!" exclaimed Virginia, as they stole downstairs, where they found their old mammy asleep in an arm-chair, her grizzled hair escaping from its bandanna, and giving her a hopeless and dismal aspect.

"Wake up, mammy,—wake up!" Patty cried. "Breakfast to cook for twelve men, and only we three to do it."

"I'se awake, I'se awake! I hasn't slept a wink." And she rubbed her deep-set eyes, still heavy and dim with four hours of continuous slumber.

"Dear me!" presently exclaimed Patty, in despair. "There isn't enough of anything at the rate those soldiers ate last night; and there are Hannah and her brother, too, and like as not Uncle Jared and Aunt Anne will get back towards noon as hungry as bears. I wonder,—I wonder"—

"What do you wonder?" inquired Virginia, a huge apron covering her pretty modern silk gown, a gift from her Aunt Anne; for both girls had worn their best frocks in honour of such a memorial occasion. Virginia was already briskly stirring some batter.

Patty stood in the middle of the great kitchen. Their mammy was bending over the fireplace, uncovering the coals.

"I wonder—if I could kill a chicken!"

"I wish you would try," said Virginia, with determination. "I never made batter-cakes in my life till yesterday, and see how well they turned out. I feel sure you will make a splendid chicken-killer. All you have to do is to wring its neck. Do it quick, so that it won't hurt. Two or three more chickens would go a great way."

"Two or three!" cried Patty.

"Why, yes. After the first, I don't believe you would mind it."

Patty stole out, with a terrible feeling of murder condemning her; while Doxy, deaf and half-blind, fumbled over the fire, unconscious of her baby's errand.

It was a cold, clear, beautiful winter morning; there were a few stars still in the sky. Patty hurried down a long path bordered with box, opened a little gate, beyond which stretched the garden, and reached the henry, far enough away for her courage to cool.

Meanwhile, although Hannah, completely exhausted, continued to sleep, it was quite otherwise with Sylvester. The life he was now leading rested him, soul and body; and in a couple of hours he had been awakened by the sound of voices. The discovery of a soldier passing at the rear of the house where his room was situated led him to creep downstairs. When he returned, he had seen and heard enough to give him a pretty clear idea of the situation. He built up his fire, and waited for the morning with that vague fear which his actual presence in the midst of Confederate soldiers awoke. The night proved a tedious one, notwithstanding the small end of it that was left; and he had just gone to his window once more, when he beheld Patty hastening down the box-bordered path. A thrill stirred him from head to foot. How dainty her feet were! How prettily she held her skirts up to keep them free from soil and damp! How prudent she was

to pin that delicate silk gown up wrong side out, and what a wonderful thing of whiteness and beauty a woman's petticoat was! Where was she going? Hadn't she had any sleep? What did the mystery of those great generals and their escorts mean? And here was he, as old as two of the soldiers he had seen,—not on their side,—not on any side, hitherto! A sense of unawakened or destroyed manliness in him suffused his whole consciousness with shame. But what if those soldiers came upon Patty unawares and frightened her! At least he could protect her. He was worth as much as that.

He went out again, unobserved. As he reached the garden, he heard a rising flutter and cackling, and, finally, a perfect bedlam of commotion. It began to dawn upon him that Patty's errand might be utilitarian.

A high wall of evergreens shut in the north side of the henry; going around this, he came in full view of the enclosure. In the middle, a dozen or more hens flying and screaming in every direction, stood Patty, like some miniature David, but very white, her eyes fixed, and with her arm stretched out so straight that it bent almost behind her, wringing the neck of a great speckled cock.

He tore the gate open, and hastened in.

"Do you think it is dead? How long does it take?" she gasped, relentlessly continuing the rotary motion.

Sylvester seized the fowl. "You have finished him. He's all right. Do you want any more? I'll do it for you."

"Virginia said two or three."

"Are these all you have?" inquired the young man, summarising the contents of the henry.

"Yes," she replied, with returning voice. "You see all there are. Our plantation has been stripped of everything till it is as bare as winter."

"What do you want," he asked, "roasters or broilers?"

"We want fried chicken."

Sylvester smiled. "All right. I'll do it and fetch them in. Where is the kitchen?"

"I'll wait, and carry them in myself," replied Patty.

"Well, go behind the trees; and I will bring them to you pretty soon." Never had Sylvester been more practical.

Patty retired, and the commotion was renewed; although, in what appeared an incredibly brief time to her, Sylvester appeared with the flower of the coop,—two in either hand.

"She would have taken them from him; but he walked resolutely by her side, carrying her trophy.

A soldier was on duty in the garden when they entered; with Patty beside him, Sylvester passed on unchallenged. Once in the kitchen, it became the art of the sisters to keep him there; and in a few minutes he sat astride a stool, industriously picking the fowls. This done, he pared potatoes, and gradually learned that the mansion, which had appeared at first sight so formidable and elegant, was reduced to a poverty of which he had had no conception in his own life.

"Where are all your slaves?" he asked ingenuously, as no one but the aged negress appeared to lend a helping hand.

"There they are—the whole twelve hundred!" exclaimed Virginia, pointing to Doxy, who was slowly grinding coffee.

"And did she—did you—prepare our supper last night? Do you"—

"Yes, Patty and I with Doxy do it all. At least we have for forty-eight hours. We came back here to find every single soul of them gone, except our mammy."

"Did you come here alone?" asked Sylvester, amazement in his eyes and tone.

"No, we didn't come alone; and we don't expect to be left alone much longer. But you mustn't ask any more questions. Can you churn?" inquired Virginia, at a desperate pass to keep him employed. "Mammy," she shouted in the old woman's ear, "bring out that cream you got last night, and put some of it in the churn. Mr. Rodman is going to make some butter for us."

A smile puckered Sylvester's face at the small pan of cream which Doxy produced. "There isn't enough to make a thimbleful," he exclaimed in derision.

"No matter: you must make it. We may need it for your breakfast. Mammy," she continued, "look and see if I mixed those batter-cakes right this time. I never expected to turn my hands to batter-cakes," she said in an aside to her guest, but with a gay, good humour, as if the experience marked a heyday in her life.

With Patty flying back and forth with the pink spots in her cheeks, and Virginia having an eye on the young man to see that he never left the kitchen, and Sylvester enjoying the notion that the sisters thought they were keeping their secret successfully, the breakfast approached a conclusion.

When it was carried in, Virginia insisted that the butter was as far from coming as ever, Sylvester's view to the contrary, and, peering under the lid again, declared that he must churn until she told him to stop.

There was some whispering between the sisters, after which Virginia disappeared.

Patty, with an art of which Sylvester could not have believed her capable, placed a chair for him near the fireplace, with its back to windows and doors generally, and, arranging one for herself, invited him to carry his

churn where he could tell her all about Mulholland while he dashed the cream. Thus it was that for the sake of The Cause she kept him out of hearing; while Virginia attended to the honours of the breakfast, bade the soldiers God-speed, saw them depart, and then hastened back to do what she could to help prepare another breakfast for the five hungry mouths still left.

The young women depended on Sylvester to ask no questions about the occurrences of the night, and he responded to their confidence. Patty meanwhile had voluntarily given him a history of their stay in Washington and their return to their old home up to the moment of his arrival with Hannah. But that morning's talk, unselfish as her motive was, completed her own undoing.

The homely surroundings of which he was a part in that roomy kitchen put Sylvester fully at his ease, and his tongue was loosed. He talked about his mother, about Hannah, describing every stage of their journey with something of the poet's touch and the artist's colour, till Patty felt Hannah's alternate hope and despair, and beheld the sky and water, the trees and mountains, with a new vision. She entered into what horses thought, and into the soul of liberty in birds, till she actually fancied that every creature in the universe was hurrying on some mission or luxuriating in conviction or sensation.

Hannah came downstairs as Patty was starting up to waken her. She was very pale. There was a heavenly clearness in her eyes, and about both girls an atmosphere of the joy of self-sacrifice, which, unlike as they were, produced in them one of those psychological resemblances baffling to the casual observer.

They had reached the point in their friendship where they took much for granted, and Patty merely pressed Hannah's hand when she said she must continue her journey that day.

Patty showed her the various rooms, pointing out the bullet-holes in the grand piano, as well as the voiceless keys. "It was as if their throats were cut," said Patty, "when the strings were broken or torn out. Everything downstairs is ruined, as you see. And, Hannah"—she put her arms around her friend's neck, and the girls nestled their cheeks together—"it may be that we shall be very poor when the war closes."

"Never mind!" replied Hannah, courageously. "Virginia taught me that poverty is a small matter, after all. There is something about you, Patty dear—about you both—which makes me feel that you will get along with life on good terms. I wish I possessed your secret."

The young people talked together through the morning as though war and its calamities were unknown; but it was the undercurrent, notwithstanding, of all their thoughts and plans.

Hannah and Sylvester had been too isolated to appreciate the enormity of the civil conflict and become aggressive in speech; while Virginia and Patty, with that queer humility—such a surprise to themselves in proud natures—avoided the subject, because they were struggling to look soberly into a future in which there might be neither a Confederacy nor a restoration for them of a life of ease and elegance. All were intent, to a certain extent, on the possibilities of the immediate future; for the Southerners were to go to Richmond in a few days, and Sylvester and Hannah were thinking of Gordonsville.

Late in the morning Mr. Jared Manners and his wife returned, having gone away till after the visit of General Manners to his children; for the brothers, distrustful of their ability otherwise to maintain family unity in the face of their tremendous differences of opinion, had agreed not to come together till the close of

the war. But, had Mr. Jared Manners known that his brother was to meet other generals of the Confederate army at Gordon Hall, he might have felt it his duty, for the sake of the Union, to try to discover what was said; for his strength, his money, and his ability had been lavished on his country.

Virginia and Patty had learned many lessons in reticence and self-restraint during the past few months; although their uncle and aunt asked several searching questions, they revealed nothing to arouse suspicion of what had actually transpired.

"Father left his faithful love for you, uncle," said Virginia, after a successful parrying on her part.

The senator's eyes filled, and he turned away to conceal his emotion.

"Mother sent you this, Aunt Anne." Patty handed her aunt a tintype, taken by a photographer whose pictures told the merciless truth.

Mrs. Manners bent an eager glance on her sister-in-law's picture; when she saw the white hair, the sunken, piercing, restless eyes, the proud, nervous confidence in every line of the thin face, ten years older than it had seemed three years ago, she broke into a dry little sob.

"It made us cry, too," said Patty.

"This war will break all our hearts. I wish it were over! I wish it were over!" the older lady exclaimed, wringing her hands.

"You will see the end in the spring," replied Mr. Manners, rigidly, endeavouring to hide his feelings and voice his convictions at the same time. "But come, Anne, we mustn't let the first dinner that our girls ever cooked with their own hands spoil." He drew the sisters under the protection of his ample shoulders and entered the dining-room, while Mrs. Manners followed with Hannah, to whom she had taken a warm fancy.

## XXI.

**I**F Hannah's life had been full of excitement and change since they parted in Mulholland, Virginia, as well, had met with several tumultuous experiences while in Washington, for she had extracted as much pleasure out of the various situations induced by her beauty and coquetry as a visit of a few weeks would allow.

Mr. Jared Manners lived in a large house, and was in the habit of giving a weekly reception. As his guests represented the heterogeneous element in attendance at the official gatherings of a senator, Virginia was in her element in watching the crowds who came and went, in vaunting the Confederacy, and in having her fling as often as possible at the society of the capital as it was then constituted.

The triumph of the Union was such a foregone conclusion among Northerners by this time that many listened with good-natured indulgence to her remarks on the lamentable social changes in Washington.

"The aristocratic Washington of the past has entirely disappeared," she was exclaiming one night to a group of young people, some of whom listened with frowns, while a few smiled at the extravagance of her denunciations. She was so fluent, so absorbed in the conviction that her view was bound to be the interesting one, so sure that still in the North, as in the South, there was a lofty deference for the South, its customs, its sufferings, its general superiority, that she rattled on, little dreaming that the patience of her hearers was born of generosity instead of acquiescence.

"I am homesick for the South! I would rather be a Lazarus in the South than a Dives in the North. There is nothing to be seen in Washington these days but soldiers and the funerals of Yankees. Even dear,

beautiful Arlington is turned into a camping-ground for Union soldiers—the very home itself of General Lee! I went out there the other day; its noble trees are all cut down, and the family relics have been stolen by vandals! Most of the rich people who are in Washington now have made their fortunes out of the war. It is horrid! The whole situation is simply unbearable! But the South"—she was gesticulating gracefully with her hands—"the South has grown poor; and she glories in her poverty. It is her distinguishing characteristic!"

"That is a fact!" interrupted an earnest, impassioned voice. "The South is poor to destitution, and for this reason alone the war is bound to end soon. I have talked with Confederate soldiers, and they say they are sick of it; that many of them have fought from the beginning with half-convictions of the right of secession, and that they would hail the day if they could join their families and live in peace on their land, no matter what the form of government."

Virginia had turned towards the speaker, when he began, with a flash of admiring assent in her eyes; but every vestige of colour left her face on seeing him, and she stood defiant at his further remarks and on the defensive against him, for she was looking at Captain Featherstone.

He had called upon her, and been refused. He had written, and she had not answered his letters. He had followed her for days from one reception to another, but had kept in the background, cynical over her exuberant pleasure in social events and jealous at the same time of the attention she courted and received. Finally, he had resolved to take her by surprise with the hope that love would triumph over political differences; but he had unfortunately joined the circle surrounding her just in time to hear her defence of the

Confederacy. Jealous and indignant at once, his patriotic impulse had swept away every consideration of prudence.

But who could look into her lambent black eyes, see the beauty of those curving lips and expressive teeth, watch the play of animation and sentiment, touched by some spark of intellectual superiority, upon her symmetrical features, and not forget the Confederate in the woman, even the tragedy of war in a charm which far surpassed her beauty, great as that was?

Captain Featherstone was enraged with himself as soon as he had finished, for he perceived he had capped the very situation by which Virginia intended to escape from her engagement.

No one attempted to break the silence, for some challenge underneath his speech communicated an electric influence.

But at length Virginia spoke: "You must have been unfortunate, Captain Featherstone, in your Southern associations. There are many Northerners who judge our best society by the poor white trash whom they accidentally encounter. A well-born Confederate would scorn to change his views in adversity." With an excusing smile to all except her offending lover, she turned away and was quickly lost in the crowd.

In the morning, the episode wore an altogether different aspect to the officer. He appeared unmanly to himself, and over-easily offended at the thoughtless language of a woman who from the very nature of her temperament would be vehement under extraordinary circumstances. And, no matter what a man's convictions were, there were two sides to every question; and Miss Manners as well as he had the right to air her political views. In this frame of mind, he resolved to try to see Virginia once more, to apologise for his harshness, if she accorded him an interview.

He had almost no hope of seeing her when the servant ushered him into the parlour; when Virginia entered therefore almost as soon as his card was taken, his surprise at her sudden appearance overwhelmed him. He forgot the excuse which had brought him there—forgot everything in the joy of being alone with her. Her dress was cut low, and from the curving line of her black hair to where her snowy bosom was lost beneath her bertha she was beautiful. But her expression was severe, and the young man felt the utter absence of welcome as she sat down.

He could think of nothing to say. The relation existing between them seemed like an improbable dream. Then, like the reality of day after a dark night, the truth of it all possessed him, the desperateness of his feeling loosed his tongue, and he poured forth his emotion, his apology, and his petition to remember her vow in such a tide of eloquence that she was strung to the highest tension.

But Virginia was a woman who, while arousing the most passionate devotion in various types of men, had never yet been swept loose from considerations of policy. From childhood she had cherished the loftiest ambitions. A captain in the Confederate army would have met with slight favour if he had failed to win the highest laurels. And here was a minor Union officer who dared dispute the right of secession, and was now challenging her personal right to secede from a promise which, when it was made, she had not the remotest expectation of ever being called upon to fulfil.

She sat with her eyes cast down, her long curling lashes on her soft, round cheek, thinking! She gave the officer a critical, sidelong glance, and thought on; but a thrill disturbed her. Something in his face frightened her with her own power—and fascinated her. Of not much account as a captain, he was of

much account as a man. Here was a personality to struggle against. The secret of much of her kindness to him in the hospital startled her. She had been more deeply interested in him than she was aware. To save herself, to save her respect as a woman who would sacrifice everything for the Confederacy, to keep herself free for the highest gratification of her ambition, she would have to keep out of sight of him. She rose; but a vivid scarlet had dyed her cheeks as these varying thoughts chased through her mind, and Captain Featherstone believed that he had at least partly won his case.

"Virginia!" His voice dwelt tenderly on her name.

Her chin lifted. She looked at him with surprise touched by the most delicate hauteur.

"Captain Featherstone"—

His head dropped, while over his features flitted an expression such as she remembered to have seen on the faces of men in the hospital who were vitally injured. But the next instant, with military precision, he drew himself erect. A hard, obstinate look settled about his mouth. "I demand your renewed promise. Will you be my wife!"

"No!" The word was gently, but so firmly, so icily spoken that it was as if two swords had met.

"Very well. I shall see you again and again—and again, and at last you will marry me! Good-morning."

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Virginia, as the outside door closed; "but I like his spirit!"

## XXII.

**T**HREE was something in the air breathing of spring as Sylvester and Hannah rode away from Gordon Hall. The skies were warm and tender, the ice had melted, a balmy breeze blew from the south, and their horses, refreshed by a long rest, carried them swiftly forward.

They spent the night at a tavern Virginia had described to them; and, with a map of all the roads and by-ways which Patty herself drew for Sylvester, they experienced no further difficulty in reaching their destination.

They had not been in Gordonsville an hour before their search began to appear both futile and intangible. They found four negroes answering to the name of Moses, but such a cognomen as Plumdiddie had never been heard of in those parts. Not to be baffled, they saw each Moses, and were speedily convinced that he knew nothing of Major Haldane. Yes, there was a soldier's burying-ground; but there were no headstones, and the record of the graves, all of which were numbered, was kept at Richmond. They would have to go to Richmond if they wanted to find out who were in those graves.

Notwithstanding this information, Sylvester and Hannah rode to the cemetery, where the shadows of the late afternoon were already gathering. They walked all over it, on the alert to discover the slightest clew. Their search proved useless; baffled, but not disheartened, they turned towards the town again. On the way they were stopped by a wrinkled old black woman who asked them if they were looking for Mose Plumdiddie. Sylvester bent eagerly forward.

"Fer, if you is," she continued, with a pride that looked ridiculous on her brutal visage, "I c'n tell you

all 'bout him. Nobuddy hyahabouts knows not'in' 'bout him by dat ar name. Dat's him's free name, dat is. Dat's de name of my ole mars'r in So'th Car'olina. I guv it to him when he wuz lookin' 'bout fer a free name. Ever sence he tuk dat ar name er Plumdiddie, Mose hez been mighty stuck up."

"Where is he?" interrupted Hannah, breathlessly.

"I cyant say 'xactly whar he is. He ain't ben seen 'bout hyah dis long time—not sence de awful storm. You hearn 'bout dat, eh?"

"No, we don't know anything about the storm. Where do you think he is?" inquired Sylvester.

"I don' know. But I'll tell you sompin'! Guv me a dollar, an' I'll tell yo' whar yo'd better look. I don't know't he's thar, but mebbe he is."

Hannah put a dollar in her hand.

"Yo' foller dis road—oh—eber so far! Den, one of dese days, yo' come to a great big bridge. Dere ain't no oder bridge 'tween hyah an dere. Den yo' goes down a leetle paf longside de bridge,—down, down inter a deep valley. Yo' foller dat valley, an' p'haps yo'll find him. Dat's all I kin tell yo'. P'haps Mose's in dat valley, an' p'haps he ain't. Ef he ain't, he's in Richmond."

"Is he a relation of yours?" asked Hannah, in doubt whether to believe her or not.

"Oh, yaas, I'se relation enough. I'm his mudder!" Filled with importance over her kinship, she courtesied, her black, toothless gums showing horribly.

"What is your name?"

"Ain't got no name. I wuz nebber notin' but mammy."

"Well, what was Moses's other name?"

"He's done lost it. I cyant tell yo' what dat ere wuz. He ain't got no oder name now but hims free name."

By this time it was so dark that Hannah and Sylvester decided to wait till morning before following the old woman's directions, and with the hope also that meanwhile they might obtain some additional clew.

By morning their quest seemed more discouraging than ever; for mammy proved to be a well-known character, who was in the habit of wandering away months at a time, and was considered half crazy.

"Perhaps," said Sylvester, chiefly to reassure his sister, "she is not so crazy as she seems. At all events, we might as well see whether there is such a valley. If there is, I shall believe there is some truth in her story.

Animated once more by hope enough at least to buoy her strength, Hannah was early in the saddle again; and towards noon Sylvester and she were riding over the very road that Haldane had trodden with almost equal discouragement when he escaped from the mine.

On and on they went, Hannah's gaze straight ahead, her thought ever on the bridge. Sylvester, ruddy, strong as a young giant, noticed the clouds, the soil, the tree growth, the beauty and variety of hill and valley, and, in the midst of it all, the aspect of a land the substance of which has been wasted and its spirit lost. In the blueness of the sky, in the velvety haze on the mountains, in the transparent atmosphere, Patty was present; and his joy was reflected in his face. Life was eternal, love was immortal. All things were therefore possible, even the finding of Marcus Haldane.

His cheerfulness doubtless inspired Hannah far more than she was aware. She looked like an angel conducting a mortal, so tense and wistful was her gaze, so fragile and attenuated her figure. Several times in the course of the day she asked Sylvester if he thought he saw the bridge, and she would describe one she was sure she could discern a little further ahead. But each

time, as they approached the spot, the bridge would vanish, and Hannah's shoulders would droop.

Few houses were visible along what proved to be an almost abandoned road; and those of the better class were set far back, almost out of sight.

At noon they picketed their horses in a grove and sat down in a patch of sunlight to eat the lunch they had brought with them. Not a foot passenger had they met, not a single vehicle. But, shortly after starting again, they overtook a boy driving a herd of lean cows. "Is there a bridge farther along the road?" inquired Sylvester.

"Yaas, sir."

"How far along?"

"Oh, I reckon a right smart distance."

"Five miles?"

"I cyant tell, but a right smart distance. If you keep on, you'll come to it."

Sylvester smiled. "We shall get there before dark, Hannah, without doubt. The old woman, you see, told the truth. Listen! there is a breeze springing up. There is going to be a change in the weather. We mustn't lose any more time. Let us take a gallop down this straight bit of road."

Hannah urged her horse, and they covered several miles before settling into a walk. Meanwhile the change in the weather was great. It had grown cold, and the sky looked wintry. The sun was near the horizon, and great banks of cloud piled up above it, through which its rays shot like the spokes of a fiery wheel. The wind began to blow hard; and the sweet sense of spring, which had softened the sterner aspect of their search to Sylvester during the day, faded as they faced a sombre evening with prospects of a night's rest uncertain.

But when the sun was half-way below the horizon,

and the lower levels of the landscape were already in shadow, far ahead of them, and an unmistakable and thrilling reality, showed a long bridge. As if aware of the situation, the horses started on a canter, the travellers reaching it as a group of mounted soldiers struck the opposite end.

Alarmed at their situation, and not able to perceive the bridle-track which the coloured woman had described, Sylvester and Hannah drew to one side and faced the west. The red beams of the setting sun enveloped them in a warm halo, and the young man's yellow hair and beard shone like gold.

The soldiers advanced at a leisurely pace, as if they were studying the situation. The sky by this time was blazing with crimson clouds which flamed around the whole horizon. The glow lent a radiance to Hannah's face; and brother and sister looked like pieces of noble equestrian statuary — symbolic guardians of the bridge.

As the soldiers came nearer, one, who was slightly in advance, rose in his stirrups; at the same moment, Hannah dropped her rein and held out both arms. "Marcus!"

Sylvester was beside her in an instant, steadyng her; for his vision, keen as that of an Indian, had discerned Major Haldane several moments before the lovers had discovered each other.

The officer sprang from his horse, and, tenderly lifting Hannah down, held her long and silently in his arms. His companions rode on a short distance; and, as Hannah had looked to the south with longing, so they yearned with sadness towards the north.

"Are you here? Is it you?" She put her hand up to Haldane's face, an expression of dreamy incredulity flitting over her own. "Yes, it is,—it is!" With a glad cry, she sank back in his arms, white and senseless, too weak to bear the ecstasy of this surprise.

When she returned to consciousness, she was lying on a heap of blue coats, while bending over her, as if she were the madonna incarnate, three homesick soldiers vied with one another in restoring her.

The winter twilight had come on rapidly; and Major Haldane, although somewhat familiar with the road, felt perplexed over what course to pursue.

A week before, a letter from Frank Livingston, full of the information Mary had imparted, enabled him to obtain a brief furlough and start in search of Hannah. And now they had found each other at nightfall in a deserted and desolate spot, miles away from any safe stopping-place.

The recollection of the mine occurred to him. Loath as he was to return to a scene of such gruesome associations, no better expedient suggested itself. The mine was comparatively near. It would afford shelter in case of rain. It would give them time to decide what to do next. Hannah's appearance, moreover, indicated that she was on the verge of dangerous exhaustion. Explaining the situation, therefore, as briefly and favourably as possible, he led the way down the bridle-track, and the party reached the gorge as quickly as safety would permit.

The densely wooded sides and the extreme narrowness of a valley bearing many of the characteristics of a canyon, together with the rapidly increasing cloudiness, made it so dark that their passage was slow and often dangerous. Even the full moon, more and more obscured by the gathering clouds, lent only an occasional and bewildering glimmer. Haldane gave the rein to his horse at length, and the creature after this made better progress. Hannah rode next; but the hour, the gravity of their situation, the mournful whistle of the wind through the gorge, and the sudden and wonderful discovery of her lover seemed to

deprive both her and her companions of any desire to talk.

Haldane was a man of the closest observation, and was able to judge of their approach to the mine with a fair degree of certainty. Dismounting after they had ridden for some time, and giving his horse in charge of one of the soldiers, he walked beside Hannah, talking to her reassuringly and explaining the situation more in detail. The moon now came out in full splendour, the clouds scudding in wild stormy masses; but the wind rose to a gale, and they breasted it with the utmost difficulty. They had nearly reached the entrance to the mine, when, making a slight turn, they came suddenly upon a diminutive tent. It was lighted by a kerosene lamp, while beside a huge chest, on which was spread a plan of the Confederate defences south of Richmond, sat Moses, Judith's husband. Just as Haldane caught a glimpse of the tent through the underbrush, the neighing of one of the horses arrested the negro's attention. Extinguishing his light instantly, he stole out, and reached the road at the moment when the moon filled with unearthly brilliancy a little opening in which Haldane and Hannah seemed enshrined. When he beheld the statuesque, beautiful woman, white as the light surrounding her, her eyes lustrous and solemn, and recognised Haldane, the apparent precursor of evil twice before in his life, he looked horror-stricken, as if he had seen some supernatural vision, and fled into the woods in a direction opposite to the one from which the travellers had come.

Hannah, with quick conviction, exclaimed, "That must be Moses Plumdiddie!" while Haldane, laughing at the unusual length of the cognomen, proceeded at once in the direction of the tent.

The party experienced some difficulty in tearing through the underbrush with the horses. Haldane was

overjoyed on discovering what an excellent shelter had been provided for Hannah at such an opportune moment.

Striking a match, he saw the lamp, and, on lighting it, found the map. Its significance and importance dawned upon him at once, and without saying anything to his companions, who were still outside, he folded the paper and put it inside his breast.

The men now proceeded to examine the contents of the chest, finding there, as Haldane expected, an ample supply of food. Notwithstanding the wind, they succeeded in lighting and maintaining a safe fire and in boiling some coffee. The horses were fed with the hay which had formed Moses' couch; while out of the heterogeneous supply of garments in the tent a bed was made for Hannah, and covered with a great, soft blanket, evidently stolen from some deserted homestead.

The soldiers took turns in guarding their post, while all of them were able to snatch a few hours' sleep beside the camp-fire.

Towards morning, when daylight had relieved his fears, Moses crept back to reconnoitre, and was caught by Haldane.

"Where is Judith?" was the officer's immediate and matter-of-fact question?

"Judith? She's in Richmond."

"Is she well?"

"Yaas, Judith's well."

"What are you doing, loafing about here? You will get into trouble again as sure as you live. You had better be starting right off. Well, why don't you go?" as Moses lingered. Haldane was enjoying the change in their situation.

Moses' bland face was a curious study. He stood before the major propitiantly, but as if on a footing of equality. In some way he had succeeded in shaking

off forever the sense of servitude and inherent inferiority. He was studying how to ask for the map, and, indeed, whether it was expedient to ask for it at all; but his slower wit could reach no conclusion.

Haldane read his thought. "You can't have that map, Moses; and it won't be well for you to tell anybody that you have had it or that I now possess it. If you do, mark my words! I will cross your path again."

Moses looked afraid, the two horns of his dilemma appearing to him sufficiently formidable, as he had been sent from Richmond to deliver the map to General Early, and the major's threat appealed to his superstition.

"But, if I can't give you the map," continued the major, "I'll pay you ten dollars in good United States money if you will cook us a square breakfast out of the things in that tent. The sooner we have had breakfast, the quicker we shall be off. Will you do it?"

"Yaas, sir." The words came slowly; over Moses' black face spread a look of mingled fear and hate.

While it was still early, the little party, refreshed and strengthened by sleep and a hearty breakfast, succeeded in reaching the bridge. Facing toward the north, they rode rapidly, since, after united consultation, it had seemed advisable for Hannah and Sylvester to return to Gordon Hall—and they had a long distance to go. There was, besides, so much risk to the soldiers of being captured that every step of their progress was attended with danger.

Meanwhile, one of Haldane's comrades, a college friend, and also a Virginian, the son of a Union minister near Orange Court-house, had helped him arrange another situation. The major was a man of action as well as quick to decide; having completed his project, he joined Hannah, and, their horses having fallen some distance behind the others, broached the subject.

Pale as she was, Hannah flushed deeply; for her first thought was that she had forced this situation on her lover. But as they rode on, and he urged with much ingenuity the benefit it might be to him if she could stay in Washington, near enough, in case he were wounded or ill, to come to him, and how much freer they could both be henceforth in their mutual relations if they seized this favourable opportunity, her reluctance yielded, and she consented to an immediate marriage.

Shortly after, the Virginian conducted the party off the turnpike, and by short cuts through patches of woods and over the fields brought them much more rapidly along their course.

It was sunset when they reached the rectory, where the minister's joy at meeting his son was so much tempered with fear because of the proximity of a considerable Confederate force that Haldane decided, if Hannah could stand the fatigue, to start on as soon as it was dark and before the moon was high enough to allow of their being seen any distance along the road.

To all of these wayfarers the sight of a home, imbued with the atmosphere of piety and loyalty, as well as the interesting occasion of their being gathered there, made the two hours of their stay memorable.

Hannah felt excited, happy, bewildered, as if in some strange way she was a fusion of two personalities,—the toiling Hannah of the cement house into whose life change never entered and another woman who was to know the comfort of adequate protection and the joy of a full right to the love of a strong man. She came downstairs after an hour spent alone, her beautiful dark hair rolled from her fine forehead in natural waves, a delicate colour in her cheeks, and such a childlike confidence of expression as she glanced at Haldane when she entered the parlour, where the entire household awaited her, that it was difficult for him to refrain

from rushing forward and taking her in his arms. But his chief thought at this time was to make every circumstance appear as natural and matter-of-fact to her as possible, and, as he met her, only the look of pride and gratitude which he gave her let her know how happy she was making him.

The minister stood near the high mantel-piece, one brass candlestick on the end, in which burned the last tallow dip that the house contained. The dim light shed a soft halo upon his silvery hair and white robes as the major and Hannah knelt before him.

Sylvester gave his sister away. The two privates, the minister's wife, and a group of coloured servants listened to the promise, "till death do us part," with a vague, vast sense of terrible uncertainty. Their congratulations were subdued by the seriousness of the times.

Immediately after the wedding, a supper of corn bread, ham, and coffee was served — a palatial one, considering the minister's exhausted larder. A half-hour later Haldane and his wife were in their saddles, the Virginians judging it possible for them to reach Gordon Hall shortly after midnight, if they met with no mishaps.

After they had ridden some distance, the major informed Hannah of the map, and that he must start south as soon as he should see her safe with her friends, but promised to make arrangements for her in Washington by telegraph. Into the few hours that they would be together were compressed, therefore, those mingled feelings of happiness and grief incident to a reunion to be broken almost as soon as consummated.

The ride was accomplished without adventure, and, late as was their arrival, there was a light still burning in one of the upper windows of Gordon Hall. It

proved to be Patty's, and in answer to Haldane's ringing knock the fearless girl answered the summons herself.

As soon as she saw Hannah, she held out her arms, but drew back haughtily on perceiving the soldiers. When Hannah explained her return, Patty acknowledged the introduction to Haldane courteously, although with a restraint which enabled both the officer and his wife to realise the extent of her magnanimity in receiving even an old friend who had become the bride of a man fighting against a cause in which she was a devout believer.

"I shall never be able to repay you for this kindness, Miss Manners,—never!" said Major Haldane; "I assure you we will not tax your generosity a day longer than possible."

Patty bowed. "I don't think of Hannah politically, or her brother, either." There was a momentary softness in her gaze as she glanced at Sylvester.

The little group, with the exception of the privates, was standing just within the door; explanations were carried on in a half-whisper. The situation was too embarrassing for all, for the officer to linger; taking his wife in his arms, he gave her one long, silent kiss, put her away from him with evident emotion, bowed silently to Patty, and was gone so quickly that the girls and Sylvester stood silent in astonishment.

Hannah suddenly broke down and cried bitterly; and Patty, since her duty as a loyal Confederate had been performed and the love of a lover was now uppermost in her thought, embraced Hannah, and whispered, "I should think, dearest, he might be perfect!"

"He is,—he is!" exclaimed Hannah between her sobs.

The noise, slight as it was, had aroused Mr. and Mrs. Manners and Virginia; and all now clustered

at the head of the stairs, and began to call down to Patty.

Sylvester was permitted to stable the horses himself this time. When he returned, the house was silent. Doxy conducted him to his room with a trembling step and a severe, suspicious air, having overheard enough to know that he had come back accompanied by Union soldiers.

Hannah's second stay at Gordon Hall was very brief; and, although Sylvester and she as well as the Virginians avoided all talk of the war, and their friendship stood the strain of the situation successfully, it was a mutual relief when Major Haldane sent an escort and the brother and sister returned with him to Washington.

## XXIII.

**A**S soon as their guests had departed, Virginia and Patty hastened to complete the few preparations necessary for their journey to Richmond. Doxy, the last venerable vestige of their once numerous slaves, moved slowly about from room to room, putting them in readiness to close; for she was to leave Gordon Hall, like so many other Southern homesteads, deserted, and accompany her young mistresses to the capital.

Senator Manners and his wife, who remained to see their nieces safely started, before returning to Washington, were more anxious about the welfare of the girls than they dared confess even to themselves.

General Manners had arranged to meet his daughters half-way; and, as their travelling alone, even for a short distance, was a novelty, the prospect animated Virginia with that sense of freedom in which she delighted.

When the last things were done, the last words said, as there still remained a couple of hours before starting, Virginia stole out of the house for a survey of the premises as well as to relieve the sadness which had insensibly crept over her at the thought of the hall being unoccupied for the first time in over a century.

She went into several of the empty cabins, visited the stables where there was no longer a horse to be seen, fastened a door here and there, and at length wandered into a path which led into the drive a short distance below the summit of the knoll, and where there was an unbroken view of the river.

She felt on the eve of great changes; and the serious view which General Lee had taken of an impending crisis coloured the hour and the scene, and softened that haughtiness of spirit which ruled much of her thought and action.

The weather had been cold enough to freeze a thin layer of ice along the river. The sky was pale, and the sunshine looked faded. A bed of dried oak leaves rustled under her feet, while an occasional evergreen, motionless and solemn, made the scene more sombre.

She drew her cape closer, and buttoned the fur around her throat. Her blooming cheeks, redder for the white ruche of her bonnet and the broad dark ribbon tied under her chin, as well as the crimson merino which she had worn with such light thoughts in her first visit to the hospital, made the lonesome spot where she stood appear as if flowers were blooming there in spite of the winter.

Aroused from her chastened thoughts by the sound of a horse's measured walk on the drive near by, she looked up. A moment later, and, riding a powerful black mare, Captain Featherstone came into sight at a point where a gigantic spruce swept the ground with its spreading branches. He drew his rein, but Virginia gazed at him without word of recognition.

He sat well, and was a commanding figure in his uniform. There was a look of determination on his face, mingled with that pride of love oftener seen in a man's eye than a woman's.

Virginia felt his right to be there, but combated it with every nerve in her being, although his height above her, a realisation of his sternness and persistency, and the secret downfall of many of her lofty ambitions made her clear, proud glance waver a second; and the soldier saw it.

Throwing the bridle on the neck of his horse, he sprang down and seized her hands.

"You must not!" She drew away, but he held her hands fast.

"Do you love me a little, Virginia? Is there one least little atom of regard in your heart for me?"

She stood resisting his gentle but firm hold, drawn as far away as she could shrink. Yet some power in him of strength or passion touched her; and, while she regarded him with absolute self-possession, it was with a discerning wonder, as if she had never fully estimated him before.

"You look as though it were war to the death," she said, a flash of humour, some fear, some coquetry in her eye. "Let go my hands."

"Will you answer me if I do?"

"Oh—yes." She had regained the air of a superior in the situation.

"Well!" He towered over her while she chafed her hands as if she felt a very tender regard for them.

She glanced up, finally, with a lovely smile. "I don't know whether I do or not."

Captain Featherstone drew a deep breath. His relief was tremendous; unfortunately, he let it be seen.

She stepped a little further away.

"You saved my life in Mulholland," he urged tenderly.

"A costly enough gift to free me from further obligation," she replied.

"I have come here at a great risk," he continued.

"By your own free will." She looked off towards the river.

"If I go away now, may I come to Gordon Hall to-morrow?"

She dropped her eyes. A smile hovered about her lips. She seemed, however, to be giving the subject serious thought; and Captain Featherstone, watching the smile, hoped everything.

At length, with a serene, inscrutable glance, although with the conciliatory charm of one who finally surrenders, she said slowly, "You may come to Gordon Hall to-morrow."

"At what hour?" he inquired eagerly.

"At eight o'clock in the evening." She smiled graciously, and bowed to dismiss him.

Not to tax her patience, he mounted and rode instantly away.

When he was out of hearing, a curious look, blended of regret, some tenderer feeling, and the triumph of being, after all, mistress of the situation, passed over her face, and she returned to the house.

Her uncle was on the porch, watching for her; and the rickety vehicle in which Patty and she were to travel to the nearest railway station was already standing at the door.

"I thought I heard a horse awhile ago," said Senator Manners. "Have you seen anybody?"

"I have been off in that direction." She carelessly waved her hand opposite to where her uncle was looking. "Probably it was the rider who haunts the hall, although he is seldom visible except on dark nights. He comes about eight o'clock." Virginia laughed.

"O Virginia, you are too full of darky superstitions. That is the mischief of being raised by a coloured mammy." Mrs. Manners patted her reproachfully on the shoulder.

"It is time to start, sister," said Patty, coming out of the house.

"I am all ready," replied Virginia, casting an affectionate glance over the front of the hall.

Doxy turned the key in the great oak door, and scrambled up to a seat beside the driver. Mr. Manners closed the carriage on the sisters, followed his wife into a second one, and they all drove away, leaving the fine old house to resist the elements as best it could, and stand waiting, a faithful refuge for broken hearts and fallen fortunes.

## XXIV.

WHATEVER compunctions Virginia felt over Captain Featherstone were forgotten from the moment of her arrival in Richmond; for her time was engrossed with an ever-increasing circle of old friends and new, many of them refugees from sections most affected by the war. Among them were officers of all ranks, as well as privates, eager to hear what she had to tell of Washington and to pour their own story of the war into a fresh ear and a heart brimming over with that richness of sympathy arising from prejudice and partisanship.

The winter had been a stormy one in the South; and the inclement weather, as well as the scant supply of food and the great depreciation of the currency, caused severe suffering in Richmond. The seriousness of this situation was increased when news reached the Confederate capital that General Grant had ordered Sheridan to make a final raid for the purpose of cutting all communications not already controlled by Sherman's army of sixty thousand men and his own immense besieging force.

Virginia felt anew the awful force of General Lee's forecast of affairs in the conference at Gordon Hall. The contrast between the triumphant feeling in Washington and the wide-spread depression in Richmond appalled her. Both she and Patty found themselves more often listeners than talkers when they sat with the other ladies, sheltered under their father's ample roof, although their mother continued to make buoyant and even boastful assertions that, dark as the present looked, the triumph of the Confederacy was inevitable. Meanwhile the girls gradually laid aside the new gowns which their Aunt Anne's indulgent love had supplied them with, and emulated the necessary eccentricities in dress of the Richmond women.

Senator Manners had given each of them a hundred dollars on parting with them, but in one short month they had spent the greater part of this United States money in luxuries for the sick. Young as they were, they grew deeply familiar with that strain of affection and pride which produces a physical heartache. Their expression became tense, while they gradually acquired the serious and elated air characterising their mother to such a degree that they were amazed when they first met her.

Although Mrs. Manners became more and more assertive as the siege of Richmond continued, the hope which had inspired her earlier in the winter had vanished. She was too intimately associated with the main actors in the war to be longer ignorant of the critical condition of affairs. But torture could not have extracted from her an admission to friend or foe that she doubted the final defeat of the Union armies. The only way in which she would admit the strain induced by her secret depression was by an occasional day spent in bed, where she would lie with her eyes closed, the blue veins showing prominent and knotted on her temples, her forehead seamed by long straight lines, her white hair harsh and wiry, as if every bit of life in her body had gone out in nervous waste.

No one but her children was admitted to her room at such times; and Patty would sit beside the bed, her hand in her mother's, her breath so choked that she would sigh heavily in spite of her effort to repress this sign of physical weakness. Mrs. Manners would open her deep-set, melancholy eyes, look at her daughter with astonished pride, and inquire: "What is the matter with you, Patty? Don't sigh in that way!"

And Patty would shake her head, but presently sigh again; and then, sometimes, her mother would press her hand, while over that stern face would flit a softening shadow of tenderness and comprehension.

If Mrs. Manners shut her children away from any expression of sympathy, she held others even more effectually aloof from the remotest hint that she or her friends were undergoing sufferings which were not pleasures and a benefiting and uplifting experience.

One of these times of withdrawal and rest had come again. She had eaten so little for many days, and there was so little to tempt a broken appetite, that the sisters put all that was left of their money together, and, while Patty sat with her mother, Virginia started out to see what a few gold dollars would unlock in the way of secret supplies. She walked down Main Street, visited various markets and bakeries, and at length discovered a half-dozen loaves of fine white bread, freshly baked.

"I'll take them all," she exclaimed, her eyes sparkling over her good fortune. "How much are they?"

"Three dollars apiece."

She stared in amazement. Bad as they had been before, prices were never as fabulous as this; she clutched her purse with a new, bewildered sense of its value. Prudence at length suggested one loaf, and she continued her search.

When she reached home, her money was gone; while all she had found was one lemon, nearly dried up, a quarter of a pound of sweet yellow butter, the loaf of bread, an ounce of genuine tea, and a quart jar of new butter-milk.

On hearing her step, Patty came out with an expectant smile. Virginia mutely uncovered her basket.

Patty looked it over, and the sisters wept in each other's arms.

After this a quietness so intense settled upon the girls that General Manners felt sorry he had let them come to Richmond.

Virginia's beauty hitherto had been radiant and al-

together youthful, but now some look of majesty and premature severity chiselled it and rendered it unique. Her coquetry dropped away from her, as if it had been a pastime of girlhood. She sought interviews with officers of high rank, with statesmen, with politicians; and by March, without their knowing it, she was as well acquainted with the situation as they were, and knew that it was probably a question of days only before Richmond would be evacuated or some great battle would end the very life of the Confederacy.

Although her nature was capable of great follies, she possessed sublime virtues; for her courage and pride were as indomitable as those of her mother. The fate of a cause which had developed a deeper affection in her than individuals had ever aroused was hanging in the balance, and its welfare became her breath of life.

The succession of events in February had been sinister for the Confederacy. Sherman's final advance by land began with the primary purpose of exhausting food supplies in North and South Carolina; and in his track arose the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night—emblems of victory to the jubilant North, of destruction to the South. In his wake, farm-houses were sucked up in the wide-spread flames, hamlets and villages were wiped out of existence. Venerable mansions, built of black cypress, caught fire, and their libraries and pictures burned as if collected for this holocaust. The burning pine forests converted the brilliant sunshine of the lengthening days into appalling gloom. All along the swath of the conqueror's track, fugitives sought protection in tents of brushwood, in abandoned freight cars—wherever there was a meagre shelter from wind and rain and cold. Columbia went up in flames, whether in voluntary sacrifice like that of a Hindoo suttee or like

that of Moscow, to prevent its spoliation by its enemy, or like that of many another city, by the torch of an Almighty hand which pulls down and sets up in accordance with far-reaching and inscrutable plans, the meaning of which is to be read by later generations — who can tell?

Into the majestic and desolate forests of the Carolinas, haunt of fugitive slave, one remnant after another of Confederates was driven by Sherman.

Charleston was evacuated after four years of heroic endurance; and a vast conflagration, the work of no man's hand or will, sealed its loss with ruin. Wilmington, the last resort for blockade runners and for supplies from abroad, followed the fate of Fort Fisher, which had fallen a month earlier; and the Atlantic coast was closed to the Confederacy.

Meanwhile, everything that could be done had been attempted on the part of General Lee to stop Sherman's forward movement. The force sent to relieve Fort Fisher, the remnant of Hood's army, and all the troops in North and South Carolina united under General Johnston to hinder his advance, lessen in this way the besieging army before Richmond, and cripple the project of that vigilant mind in the wooden hut south of the James intent on the capture of the Confederate capital and intent on preventing its evacuation by the army behind its triple entrenchments.

Richmond meant the Confederate government; Lee's army meant the hope and sentiment of the Southern people.

At this critical juncture the president of the Confederacy met General Lee for a secret consultation at General Manners' house. To insure greater privacy, he went on foot. It was a dark, wet night early in March; and his thoughts, notwithstanding his sanguine attitude towards the future, became insensibly tinged

with sadness and apprehension as he walked towards the bluff on which the finer residence portion of Richmond was situated. Below him rolled the James, yellow and swollen with long-continued rains. It flowed past sections where demoralised and hungry negroes gathered, only waiting for some signal to rise; it washed quarters where the soldiers who had defended their capital so long worked in the trenches on short rations; it surged near the foundations and mildewed the walls of the low, long, barnlike barracks of Libby Prison, where thousands of Union soldiers waited for deliverance by the Army of the Potomac.

Meanwhile, in one of the deep windows of the library of her home Virginia sat, the curtains drawn to shut out the light. The day had been harassing. There had been much coming and going. All kinds of rumours were afloat concerning the strength of the three armies leisurely but surely closing in upon Richmond. Women from Columbia, from Wilmington, from Charleston, had called to leave their treasures with Mrs. Manners, and weep over their misfortunes. Her father and several other officers had spent the morning in the library, talking over the situation; for the room had become a rendezvous in the daytime for political or military appointments, although usually at night it was the most deserted spot in the house. Virginia had chosen it, therefore, as the best place in which to snatch an hour of quiet.

The murmur of the wind, the steady fall of the rain, the darkness of a scantily lighted city, the footfall of an occasional pedestrian, usually a soldier, directed her thoughts to the misery hidden by the darkness and increased by the storm; but gradually the solitude of the street and the stillness of the room soothed her, and she fell asleep.

When she awoke, although she was still completely

shut in by the curtains, she became aware that the library was occupied. She had been a necessary listener to so much which had been said there, and felt so stupid from sleep, that at first she made no effort to discover herself, and finally judged it better not to, both because of the secret nature of the conversation and her quick perception that a drama was being unrolled before her of historic importance. If she went out, the plan already partially projected might never be consummated; if she remained, she trusted her own ability and integrity not to divulge it.

Peering through the curtains, she perceived President Davis and General Lee seated at the table in the centre of the room, and standing near, as if he might have come by accident and not appointment, Senator Wigfall of Texas.

She sat observing the three men with a woman's discrimination and curiosity, and noticed a polite reserve about the president, as if he listened outwardly, but not inwardly, to what the senator said. His sharply defined profile, his amiable yet sarcastic mouth, his deeply set and finely shaped but over-sensitive eyes, his elegance of manner which froze under an assumption of cordiality, gave her a restless feeling; and she turned with relief towards Senator Wigfall, whose scarred, aggressive face grew animated and even fierce as he described the situation.

"The people are no longer with us," said the senator. "They have lost faith in the policy of our government. They abet desertions. Our army is diminishing through desertions alone at the rate of a regiment a day!"

President Davis' eyes filled with tears. "You distrust the great heart of the Confederacy too much, sir. That heart will never fail us."

"I don't dispute the heart," replied the senator.

"It is all right. It is a secession heart. 'But there are times when it is better to take counsel of the head than the heart.' This is one of those times. Our people have become 'incapable of further heroic effort.' It is a case of political and military nervous exhaustion."

"We have not met to criticise the government," said the president, glancing at General Lee for approval.

"My God, President Davis," exclaimed the senator, "we want to know what the matter is and where relief is to come from! We can't afford any longer to cherish undue sentiment about our government, our people, our army, if we are to save the Confederacy."

The president turned from the senator as if he had not heard a word, and said, "General Lee, what are your latest advices?"

General Lee hesitated before replying, and drew a thoughtful breath on looking up. There was a cordial, friendly light in his eye. The president and he were in evident personal accord, no matter how they might differ in opinion. The utter absence of self-assertion in the soldier's manner, added to his dignity and uniform calmness, made his official suggestions always valuable ; and whoever listened to him did so with a trust in his single-mindedness which was a rare tribute to the absence of personal ambition in his public policy. Before replying, however, to the President's question, he took the opportunity to support the senator's statements.

"Senator Wigfall does not in the least overestimate the gravity of the situation," he said. "It is almost impossible for the people who are shut up in Richmond to realise how fast the army is melting away; and it is better that this should be concealed from them as long as possible, with the desperate hope that a reac-

tion may set in. But you asked about my latest advices." He then proceeded to outline, clearly and dispassionately, the movements of Sherman and Sheridan, of Johnston and Early, and to place comprehensively before his hearers the desperate straits in which the Confederacy was placed.

"There is the situation in a nutshell, President Davis," said the senator, bringing his fist down on the table with emphasis when General Lee had finished. "If we don't form some plan by which to reach the mountains, we are lost."

President Davis set his chin haughtily in his high stock, and General Lee looked at his watch.

"What time is it, general?" asked the senator, natively. "I've got an appointment at ten o'clock at Ford's Hotel."

"You will have to hurry to get there, senator; for it only wants a quarter now."

"A great deal of time wasted," said President Davis, as the senator withdrew.

"If you will pardon me, sir, I think all that the senator said was judicious. As in the days of old, so now,—'I will look unto the hills from whence cometh my refuge,'" added General Lee, with deep solemnity. "We are reduced to two necessities. We must evacuate Richmond—the sooner, the better—and we must seek the mountains."

"As commander-in-chief, why didn't you come to this decision before we reached the plight we are in?"

"I hold a title without its functions. I have therefore never assumed a position which I could not maintain," replied the general, without bitterness, but with sober conviction. "Supreme authority was given to me too late. We are but the shadow of a power now, and all that is left for any of us to do is to act from day to day as the emergency arises. Have you thought

out a scheme, President Davis, by which we might divert General Grant's vigilance and engage his army long enough for us to evacuate and escape? It is all there is left to do."

Virginia thrilled with horror and grew suddenly dizzy. The president rose and paced the room in great excitement, various and contending emotions chasing one another over a countenance marked by sentiment and passion rather than by the energy of will restrained by judgment.

General Lee sat still, his head slightly raised, his eyes full of subdued fire, and with a look of foresight, as if for him the agony of suspense was over and he was calmly facing inevitable disaster.

"If you think things are as bad as you represent them," said President Davis, pausing in his walk, "why not make a clear statement to the people and surrender at once?" His tone was deeply sarcastic, his expression sceptical in the highest degree. The next instant some tender feeling of friendship touched him, and he laid his hand affectionately on the general's shoulder. "I do not agree with you as to the gravity of the situation," he added kindly, but emphatically.

General Lee looked up with a thoughtful smile tinged with sadness. "You ask why, believing as I do, I do not publicly advise an immediate surrender. Because a nation has no moral right to surrender till it is drawing its last breath. National life is like mortal life. The unknown factor sometimes counts for more than the known. While I believe the Confederacy is dying, I am bound to act as if it were sure to live." He grasped Mr. Davis's hand in both of his. "Will you permit me, my dear friend, to suggest the one method that has occurred to me by which we may prolong our national life and possibly save it?"

The president resumed his seat and sat with bowed head.

"My plan," continued the general, "would be to evacuate Petersburg and Richmond and unite with Johnston. We should then have the mountains open to us and the south-west also, provided we could get enough flat-boats together to bridge the tributaries of the Roanoke. Supplies would have to be accumulated at Amelia Court-house, or, in other words, at the nearest point on the Danville Railroad, where both Johnston's army and mine could most advantageously meet. The Danville road is now our great hope; and, to reach it, the troops would have to leave Richmond by the Cox road."

"The Cox road follows pretty closely the south side of the Appomattox, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it follows the south bank almost due west. Here it is." The general traced the road on a map spread before him. "But there is one serious difficulty. You will notice that the Boydton plank road runs not very far below the Cox road. Now the Union left reaches almost to the Boydton road, and that brings its flank dangerously near the Cox road. Before we can try to escape, therefore, we must do something radical to divert Grant from an inkling of our purpose, and also make him withdraw his left from the neighbourhood of the Cox road."

President Davis grew white and rigid as General Lee proceeded. He followed the plan with difficulty, so powerfully was he affected by the thought of the loss of Richmond,—the loss of power and prestige which the surrender of the seat of government implied.

General Lee paused occasionally and breathed deeply, the only evidence of that tremendous strain involved when broken hopes are put in the background while the brain works on with the exactness of a

machine. And slowly he unfolded his plan for a last desperate attempt to compel the withdrawal of Grant's left flank, in order that the way might be opened for the retreat of the beleaguered Confederates from Richmond.

"The one true objective of the movement, whether it resulted in victory or defeat, would be to cover the evacuation," he concluded. "It is our only chance, President Davis! Do you advise me to try it?"

The president did not immediately reply.

On the mantel stood a French clock. Virginia could hear its muffled ticking. She felt as if her hand were resting on the pulse of the Confederacy.

When the president at length spoke, his voice was husky and broken, but his tone defiant. "We will make the trial, with the firm hope of victory. The way must surely clear up to leave us in possession of our glorious capital."

General Lee sighed heavily; from this moment his words and manner contained no suggestion of advice or opinion.

There was some further talk about preliminaries before this decision could become official. A date for the sortie was considered; and then, by a common effort, they threw public life aside, and conversed intimately and affectionately about their families. But presently they went out, and the butler came in immediately after to cover the fire and extinguish the lights.

Virginia crept up to bed to pray and weep, a weight like that of a heavy, inexorable hand pressing upon her heart. When her emotion was spent, she began to make plans, the results of which might have been apparent for several nights afterwards to any one who could have observed her movements. As she could execute as well as plan, what she accomplished remained unknown to all but Patty.

Behind the mansion was an extensive lawn and garden, surrounded by a high brick wall and reaching several hundred feet to the rear of the slave quarters, the windows of which faced inward towards the main house. At the foot of the garden was an ice-house, long unused and hidden from observation between the wall and a row of tall arbor vitæ. The door of the ice-house hung on one hinge, the roof was sunken, but the bottom of the pit was still covered with a deep layer of sawdust. The security of the place lay in its look of neglect and dilapidation; and, as Virginia had carried her mother's keys for some time, she selected it as a hiding-place for valuables.

Perceiving that she could not reach this spot unobserved in the daytime in her exit across the court between the main house and the quarters, she chose the small hours of the morning for her enterprise. As she needed assistance, she told Patty that in view of the distressing condition of affairs in the city there was danger of a mob at any moment, and that in such an event their house would be one of the first to be attacked.

Patty agreed at once that the house with everything in it was in constant jeopardy, and readily consented to visit the ice-house that night to make sure of its resources.

The tall clock in the hall struck three as the sisters stole out. Not a star was to be seen. It was so dark that they had to feel their way. But every bush and shrub was so familiar that they soon reached the arbor vitæ, scratched their way through, and let themselves down into the pit, drawing the unhinged door in place after them with great difficulty. Virginia exclaimed with pleasure when she found the floor partially covered with an accumulation of kitchen débris, thrown there from time to time by lazy servants, before the

trees had reached their present height. Pots and kettles and pans, broken china, leaky wash-tubs, and worm-eaten harness hobnobbed in mouldy and rusty confusion, and in sufficient quantity to conceal any disturbance of the sawdust.

For a week of nights the sisters rose at two, and went back and forth with great baskets of old Madeira, with cases of silver, with a complete service of Dresden china, with boxes of jewels labelled with name and address of the various owners, with laces, heirlooms for generations, with India shawls and miniatures and rare ivories, with fans and historic snuff-boxes and watches, with portfolios of first-proof engravings, with many of their father's favourite books, and buried these and other treasures, not only in the sawdust, but in pits underneath, which Patty dug with a rusty, broken shovel, while Virginia, with her keener sight, mounted guard.

When the task was completed, and the sisters felt sure, from their strolls in the garden for exercise after breakfast, that neither the flagged walk nor the grass revealed any mischievous traces of their exploit, Virginia breathed more freely for a day or two; and then the greater dread settled down on her with crushing weight.

## XXV.

MARCH wore slowly away, and the 25th came, —the day on which an army whose meat supply was exhausted in December prepared to make its last aggressive movement.

General Lee now turned the desertion and defection of his own soldiers to good account; for he threw forward his pickets with orders to creep through the Union lines with their arms as if they were deserters, —a method of transition from the Confederate to the Union army which had been practised so long that it threw the Unionists off their guard. Once within the lines, the Confederate pickets were to seize the Union pickets and send them to the rear.

With the first intimation of the success of the ruse, the Confederate columns followed behind the pickets in the first grey of the dawn. Short as was the distance they had to cover, the array of defences in front of them was formidable in the extreme; for the Union lines were so arranged that they could pour a destructive fire upon their enemy at any angle. Forts united by parapets armed with infantry defended the lines, while their approach was hindered by vast areas of abatis, ditches, and palisades.

Notwithstanding these apparently insurmountable difficulties, the Confederate veterans rushed forward, captured Fort Steadman, took some of the garrison prisoners and compelled the remainder to flee, turned the guns of the redoubt right and left, silenced three batteries and caused them to be abandoned, and thus successfully carried out the first step in General Lee's scheme.

But, as at Spottsylvania and in the mine disaster before Petersburg, the assaulting body did not receive sufficient support, so, in the carrying of Fort Stead-

man, General Gordon was not sustained. But, although unassisted by the reserve, he attempted to take the next fort at his left and seize the ridge behind; yet still for some unexplained reason the once magnificent Army of Virginia failed to consummate the success of their advance force and support the gallant Gordon. Repulsed in his attempt on Fort Haskell, Gordon rallied his men at Fort Steadman, but soon lost this redoubt, which he had won under such difficulties.

While they were in the open between the Union and Confederate lines, his little army, powerless either to retreat or advance, was raked with a consuming cross-fire of artillery. Hundreds in this hopeless situation surrendered. Upon the sturdy remnant advanced, with other troops, the weather-beaten Sixth Corps, which had stood the storm of the three days' battle in the Wilderness, the rush and rally, the marching, the riding, the raiding in the Shenandoah. Confident and proud with its brilliant record of bravery and victory, the notable Sixth Corps charged across the space between the two lines of defences, and swept everything before it.

At the head of his regiment in the Sixth Corps, its colonel having fallen, Major Haldane rode; and his men were among the first to carry the Confederate picket line. Just within these lines General Manners fell; beside him lay a Union soldier with a boyish face, white and powder-stained.

The general remained conscious; as the hurry of retreat set in, he expected to be trampled to death any moment. While he lay in this suspense, something in the youthful countenance beside him made him examine it more closely; and he recognised the elder son of his brother Rufus just as everything turned dark before him.

As the uproar and confusion in his immediate neigh-

bourhood lessened, a relief squad rushed forward to remove the wounded, and, discovering the general, several men hastened to carry him behind the breast-works. As they raised him, he pointed to Cornelia's son, gasped, "My nephew!" and fainted.

When he recovered consciousness, on a cot beside him lay the Union soldier, also conscious; as the veteran and the young man looked into each other's eyes, Brant feebly extended his hand, and the general, seizing it, sobbed aloud.

Towards night Richmond reacted, and only the principal actors in the drama appreciated that the last purely offensive movement of the Army of Virginia had been made. Meanwhile General Manners had been removed to his home, and his nephew lay delirious in an adjoining room.

Mrs. Manners sat beside her husband, her dark eyes shining like coals, or carried out the directions of the doctor and surgeons, allowing no hands but her own to minister to him.

Patty and Virginia, sweeping away all thought of the unhappy differences which had kept them from writing to their cousin for four years, watched beside him, and on their knees prayed that "Aunt Cornelia" should be delivered from the great sorrow which threatened her.

Outside of Richmond, General Grant, his vigour never more in evidence, his sagacity equal to the climax of his prolonged and tenacious siege, proceeded to mass the greater part of his army south and west of Petersburg in anticipation of the retreat, and prepared also, if the retreat should not be carried out, to attack General Lee in the direction of his supplies and of General Johnston's possible support.

Thus, with some minor engagements between besiegers and besieged, which, like the mounting fire of

a fatal fever, seemed to hold out a deceptive promise to the thirty thousand Confederates still in camp at Richmond, the seven days of suspense between General Lee's unsuccessful effort to cut the Union army in two and the eventful 2d of April counted off the life of the Confederacy.

## XXVI.

THE little colony of Mulholland people in Washington had drawn very closely together during the winter; and, unconsciously to herself, as the Army of the Potomac continued its monotonous life in camp, Cornelia dropped to a certain extent the haunting fear of nearly four years, and entered into the variety of scene and association which the capital afforded.

Colonel Boudinot and old Mr. Manners attended the sessions of Congress as regularly as the members themselves; the endless argument continued between them, a note of increasing confidence in the farmer's statements and a dogged scepticism still noticeable in the colonel's. But both united in admiration of President Lincoln, the colonel admitting with a show of unprejudiced generosity that, whatever anybody might believe or disbelieve concerning slavery, the Emancipation Proclamation was a *coup de main* exhibiting the greatest statesmanship.

A new world opened to Hannah. Everything that wealth and love in a husband's absence could procure became hers. Many needs which her own small knowledge of society could not have supplied were anticipated; and, what with Mrs. Boudinot's friendly interest and Cornelia's almost maternal solicitude, the winter was fitting her in many ways for her first encounter with Mrs. Haldane as well as for the larger social demands her marriage would make upon her if Major Haldane survived the war.

Sylvester spent a great deal of time at the Corcoran Gallery, and studied the statuary and pictures in the government buildings. He made many attempts at copying, while through Mrs. Manners' influence a number of his sketches fell under the notice of a great

artist. The artist passed a favourable judgment upon them, notwithstanding their excessive crudity, asked to meet the young Jerseyman, and gave him much sound advice. As a result of this interview, Sylvester electrified Hannah by declaring his intention to obtain a liberal education first, and to study art later, with the ultimate design of making it his profession. Hannah could not see where he was to obtain the means for such an extended preparation for life; but, when she told him so, he straightened his shoulders, and in nervous as well as physical force looked a giant.

"I have the strength of two ordinary men, Hannah; and my hands must earn what my brains require. I expect to ask no odds of anybody."

She threw herself into his arms, promising to help him all she could, while in the thought of both, though neither mentioned her, was Patty. Sylvester had seen enough of men and women of all classes during the winter to let him feel that a gulf yawned between Patty and himself; but he was an American of as good stock originally as Patty was, and he set to work with manly literalness of endeavour to make himself worthy of her.

John continued to think a great deal on the South; and he often asked to be taken there, as if "the South" were as definite and circumscribed as a room, and contained nothing but his father. His brother seemed almost to have faded from his memory; and he talked as if his mother had no other son than "her little John," as he called himself, when he felt affectionate.

When word came from the front, after the Confederate repulse at Fort Steadman, that Brant was reported among the prisoners or missing, Mrs. Manners held herself in readiness to start at once. A day or two later, when news crept through the lines that General Manners was mortally wounded, and that his nephew, Brant Manners, of Butler's division of the Army of the

Potomac, also wounded, was being cared for in his uncle's house, the awful tension of her suspense relaxed, and, burying her white, set face in her hands, she wept convulsively.

Colonel Boudinot tried to comfort his daughter; and, while he talked to her, old Mr. Manners paced the room, his arms folded, his square chin resting on his high stock, his lips silently working, his deep-set eyes pathetic in their mournfulness and resignation.

When Colonel Boudinot, thinking it best to leave his daughter alone for a while, passed Mr. Manners on his way out of the room, he paused, irresolute, tears in his fine but cold blue eyes. "I have lied to you like a trooper for years, Mr. Manners, about sons. I'd be willing to suffer your misery to have a son like either Rufus or Gordon. But Brant is my grandson also; and I find this uncertainty hard enough, God knows. My poor Cornelia! We must all bear up! We must all bear up!"

Mr. Manners looked solemnly ahead, as if he had only half heard his neighbour, and replied inconsequently: "Gordon is dying! My oldest son is dying! There isn't a North or a South in the face of such misery as this. Gordon took Brant into his own home, thank the Lord! We are one family still!" He continued to walk, and Colonel Boudinot stole out of the room.

Meanwhile, in that Virginia home, the thought of victory or defeat was lost in the fate of the two soldiers. Brant's life hung by a thread, although the surgeons held out a little hope. But on the third day after the battle, Mrs. Manners' physician led her away from her patient, and, when he was alone with her, told her in broken tones that General Manners could not live through the night.

She had taken the doctor downstairs to a room which

the general had formerly used as an office. As she sat down in the middle of a long settee, she glanced around the room as if her husband's presence pervaded it. Her hands were folded in her lap. She sat erect, the quivering line of her mouth the only sign of feeling.

While the doctor talked, she looked steadily at him, the light in her eyes focussed so intensely that the thought passed through his mind that he had never seen this glitter except in the eyes of those who were soon to die or lose their reason. He felt deeply troubled, and, instead of restraining his own sorrow, yielded to it, hoping that through some hidden spring of her sympathetic nature she would relax and shed tears, also. But she had no comfort to communicate, no grief that she could share, even in this most tender relation between a good physician and a wife and mother to whom he had been an angel of mercy at the gates both of life and of death. He thought he had never seen such a wreck. Her blanched hair, her spare figure, the blue veins on her temples, knotted and swollen, her rigidity of attitude, the vigilance of thought and feeling which had continued so long that she could not relax, told the story of an emotional nature capable of the tragedy of suffering.

She rose almost before he had stopped talking, glided noiselessly behind his chair, and went swiftly out of the room.

He followed her to the door, and watched her ascend the stairs with a swift, steady walk, like an arrow shot by fate to the death; and he stopped in the middle of the great hall, overcome with her misery.

Virginia came out of the dining-room, and, seeing the doctor, asked breathlessly, "How is father?"

"My dear,"—he took her hands,—“try to comfort your mother. I have just told her. Take care of her,

or she will break all to pieces." He put on his coat, seized his hat, and left the young girl standing there alone with a sense of awful space and emptiness. There was a loud ringing in her ears. She felt a choking sense of suffering and calamity. She started to obey the doctor's warning. At the head of the stairs she met Patty, looking very white and apprehensive. "I think father must be worse, Virginia," she whispered. "Mother just passed me with such a look on her face,—such a look!"

"O—Patty, Patty!" And without further explanation the younger sister understood.

The night wore slowly on. The clock in the hall told off the hours. The chamber of the dying man was large and airy, but the windows were wide open. The earthy smell of a spring already well advanced in that genial climate contained a damp, sweet fragrance as of growing things. A bowl of violets that Patty had picked early in the morning stood on a table beside the general, and gave forth an emanation of something peaceful and heavenly.

Around the room were grouped men who held positions of historic importance in the great conflict. General Hill stood near the head of the bed, while opposite him sat General Lee, who in the hour of death was to speak fondly of his illustrious friend and companion. General Gordon was there, observing with grief and tenderness the last watch with a veteran of his corps. And Longstreet and Fitz Lee were there, and the president of the Confederacy. With all their craft, with all their skill, with all their fame, these men yielded without parley to the commander who is the final victor in every battle with mortals.

The intermittent and musical jangle of the town clocks numbered the hours to the outside world, and finally called it anew to the stress, the anxieties, the

uncertainties of life. The sun rose, and, as its light fell in a golden drift upon the bed, the soldier lying there made his first and last surrender.

Generals and statesmen silently withdrew, leaving Mrs. Manners and her children alone with their dead; but hardly had they gone, so near was now the crisis of Richmond's fate, than their thought and time were engrossed with the final steps to be taken, preparatory to the evacuation of a city which for nearly four years had symbolised the Confederacy to the world.

## XXVII.

GENERAL Manners was buried with military honours in the historic cemetery of Richmond, and so rapidly did events now follow one another that Virginia and Patty accepted them with a fortitude in marked contrast with their youth.

Brant continued to hover between life and death; but there were hours when the sisters had to leave him in other hands, as well as divide their ministrations between him and their mother. The servants dwindled to three the day after the funeral. The house continued crowded with refugees, officers, and callers from morning till night.

Doxy remained upstairs with the invalids; while Virginia and Patty, when they were not occupied in nursing or with visitors, were in the kitchen, looking over the slender and diminishing resources for the table or trying to learn to cook themselves, foreseeing a time near at hand when they might be utterly dependent upon their own exertions. They grew as white as their own camelias.

Meanwhile the Confederate army intrenching Richmond, again on the defensive, waited in ragged and hungry uncertainty for an aggressive manifestation by Grant. Everything indicated a profound crisis about to be precipitated by the Unionists. General Lee, convinced that the one direction from which supplies could now reach him would be the first point menaced, thinned his sadly inadequate forces along the intrenchments, in order to protect the south and west approaches to the city.

As events proved, General Grant arranged his advance movement as General Lee had foreseen. Three divisions, which had threatened Richmond from the north all winter, were now transferred to the south of

Petersburg to assist in its reduction. Two corps were moved to the south-west in the line of General Lee's sole possibility of escape, and supported by Sheridan's invincible cavalry. The Union defences opposite the Confederate lines were strengthened; the immense supply of stores at City Point, north-east of Petersburg and on the James River, was carefully guarded.

Richmond had remained quiet since the sally to cut the Union lines in two; and while such important events were taking place a few miles south of it, in an immense half-circle around Petersburg, the city continued in profound ignorance of the inevitable and near culmination of the siege. The depression arising from the recent repulse was replaced by a blind and growing confidence that the army within the city under Lee would be able to unite with the army outside under General Johnston, and that together they would attack the Union forces. Even the newspapers failed to obtain an inkling of the gravity of the situation.

The great movement which General Grant had begun went steadily on, however; and thousands of Northern veterans marched doggedly forward through a thickly wooded country or through swamps in the direction of Lee's possible retreat. The spring rains wet them to the skin, the treacherous Virginia quicksands imperilled their progress, the miry roads delayed their artillery; but they built a strip of corduroy road for the teams and proceeded, they altered the gauge of railroads. Wherever they planned to be, there they arrived.

The distant sound of skirmishes along the line, similar to those which had continued all winter, gave the citizens of Richmond no clew to the seriousness of the situation. Although they were apprehensive, their sense of present security was increased by the pouring rains which fell on the night closing the first day of

the Federal advance, and from dawn till dark on the 30th.

But, if Richmond itself cherished a delusive hope, the vigilance of its great general, who was ever on the wing between the capital and Petersburg, apprehended the crisis. Leaving General Longstreet to guard Richmond with but eight thousand troops, he sent the remnant of his devoted army, except the portion protecting Petersburg, to the south-west to defend the extreme limit of the Confederate line.

They surprised the skirmishers of General Warren; but supporting these skirmishers were thousands of Unionists, and back of these were other thousands, and the Confederates were checked. General Warren turned the defensive movement of his men into an attack, and the Confederates withdrew into their intrenchments.

Then followed for the Union forces the alternating victory, defeat, and victory again of Five Forks, the last fierce battle of the war fought in the open by the Army of the Potomac.

When the three days of bitter struggle ended, portions of two corps, ragged, hungry, discouraged, desperate—veterans fighting in accordance with their honest convictions—lay within Petersburg. Without were three corps, well-clad, well-fed, resolute, brave, persistent, inspired by victory, warmed by a belief that the end of the fratricidal conflict was near, and exalted with the hope that a great Federation, disrupted by four years of war, would soon be welded into a Union henceforth indissoluble.

## XXVIII.

SUNDAY dawned cloudless upon Richmond. The confusion before Petersburg was too far away to be heard, although there were rumours that General Lee had won a great victory.

The air was balmy, the lawns were turning green, the spring flowers were out, the birds were singing. The usual life began its round. The church bells rang, and the streets filled with people on their way to morning service.

Patty felt cold and silent, with a great hurt to which she could not give utterance. Her own activity of spirit was suspended, but at Virginia's solicitation she stole forth alone to attend St. Paul's.

Virginia had been very tender over Patty since their father's death, and watched her out of sight with a burden even heavier than that of the younger sister. She lingered at the window with a solemn feeling of loss. In the familiar look of the houses across the street there was something wanting. The warm sky did not make her feel glad and careless as formerly. The throngs of church-goers appeared care-worn and sorrowful to her. Most of the women were in black. The stress of the siege, which she now knew might end at any moment with the loss of Richmond, cast a shadow over the very landscape.

As Patty entered the pew where she had last sat beside her father, a lump rose in her throat, and she knelt a long time to hide her tears. When she rose, she saw President Davis across the aisle in his accustomed seat. She noticed how hopeful and resolute he appeared.

The service began. Occasionally a sob interrupted the prayers, for mourners were in every pew. But prayer and chant, lesson and hymn, proceeded to the end, and the rector ascended the pulpit.

As he announced the text, an aide-de-camp walked down the middle aisle, and handed the president a telegram. While he read it, the rector waited, and a great hush fell upon the congregation. The president sighed, rose with dignity and deliberation, and walked out of church, but left behind him a universal sense of doom.

When the congregation dispersed shortly after, the streets were thronged. The lower classes were everywhere, eager, excited, expectant. The first signs of a mob were already visible.

Patty hastened home and Virginia met her at the door, the tears running down her white cheeks. "The news from Petersburg, Patty — have you heard it? It is shameful, terrible! The disgrace, the disgrace! It will kill mother."

Patty laid a still, firm hand on Virginia. "Have we been defeated? I have hurried so fast that I couldn't stop to speak to anybody. There are such crowds — such swarms of blacks everywhere! It makes me think of the bread riot last month. Was it the telegram the president received in church? He went right out."

"General Lee has sent word that Richmond must be evacuated this evening!" Virginia's voice thrilled along Patty's veins, and she felt turned to ice.

"Mrs. Hampton is upstairs now, packing her things," she continued; "and Mrs. Strong left five minutes ago with only a hand-satchel, afraid for her life," she said. "They think of nothing but getting away. Peter is missing, too; and the cook is out on the sidewalk rejoicing with a lot of darkies. We shall be left all alone here, Patty, as sure as you live — you and Doxy and I, with mother and Cousin Brant."

Patty regarded Virginia with a kind of steadfast courage which gradually imparted itself to the older

sister. "The text this morning was, 'The Lord is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' He will take care of us."

"I have my doubts," replied Virginia, half whimsically, much discouraged; "but you have comforted me." She pulled herself together, and her usual daring returned. "Whatever happens, we must keep the news from mother and Brant as long as possible. And I hope everybody will go! We can lock up the house downstairs then, and barricade ourselves upstairs. There is sure to be great confusion."

The crisis so long apprehended in Petersburg, and awaited with such eagerness by the Unionists, had arrived. The outer line of the defences was carried by General Parke. General Wright, circling to the rear, captured thousands of prisoners; and General Ord broke through the lines. Hemmed in on right and left, the Confederates next lost Fort Gregg and Fort Alexander; the besieging lines grew shorter and shorter; the concentration of the Union forces threatened to become irresistible.

Although General Longstreet, having abandoned the defences of Richmond north of the James, now joined General Lee at Petersburg, and General Hill tried to regain the captured forts, their united efforts proved futile; and the best the Confederates could hope for was to retard the occupation of the invested city by the Federalists.

With losses exceeding ten thousand, with the country between Five Forks on the west and City Point on the east in General Grant's hands, and with escape for the army and citizens in both Petersburg and Richmond likely to be shut off at any moment, General Lee telegraphed to President Davis: "My lines are broken in three places. Richmond must be evacuated this evening,"

By three o'clock, as Virginia had anticipated, Patty and she found themselves deserted. All their guests had fled. The men on whom they ordinarily could rely were with the army. The cook had followed in Peter's steps; but Doxy, decrepit and timid, refused to stir from her sick mistress.

The streets were filled with fugitives. Wagons piled with baggage hurried to the railway station. Loads of furniture, with children huddled between the pieces, lumbered out of Richmond, while the intrenchments still offered a protection. Crowds of negroes, arm in arm or marching in military fashion, went singing and shouting through the fashionable thoroughfares. In a retired room in the capital, the City Council attempted to devise schemes to meet the growing terror of the situation.

Members of the government and army and navy officers, who lingered in the city too late, dared not expose themselves, and remained to swell the list of prisoners. Military guards from the treasury to the depot protected the removal of the specie; and thirty-four wagons, each with a keg of gold, soldiers armed with muskets and revolvers marching on either side, a clerk of the treasury beside every driver, reached the Danville station in safety. Ambulances drawn by four horses and loaded with silver cream-pots, sugar-bowls, coffee-urns, trays, and piles of small pieces of silver, as well as countless jewels in gold,—the contribution of Southern women to sustain the Confederate credit when the treasury was almost bankrupt,—followed in the wake of departing regiments.

Vagrants began to block the principal streets and threaten to plunder the stores. Screams of terror and shouts of coarse laughter and ribaldry filled the air.

Virginia and Patty tried as long as possible to keep the situation a secret from their mother, but the tur-

moil finally told its own story. Mrs. Manners, too weak to lift a hand, moaned continually; and Brant lay in the adjoining room, his blue eyes glassy and excited, his lips open, his breath coming in short, panting gasps.

Towards night Patty crept downstairs, locked and barred the offices, closed the shutters, and double-bolted the doors, but left lights burning everywhere, so that the house should look protected and occupied. As she fussed from one big, solitary room to another, a fierce outburst of cheers and yells sounded along the street; and above a sudden uproarious jangle of bells and blare of musical instruments the clear, jubilant strains of "The Star-spangled Banner" rose triumphantly.

In the midst of the noise, the disorder, the growing lawlessness of the starved, the pauper, and the vagrant portion of the population, the evacuation of Richmond and Petersburg by the government and the army proceeded so quietly that the Union pickets knew nothing of it till nearly morning. The special train which carried President Davis and his cabinet was miles away from Richmond when the evacuation became known to the Unionists. But meanwhile the terror of that wild night to those who remained in the capital was supreme, for the militia which the City Council had appointed to maintain order had fled. The patrols were nowhere to be seen. The rabble surged in greater and greater volume, clamouring before the commissary stores and bursting into the saloons and wholesale liquor houses. A great light suddenly flared over the business portion of Richmond; and the cry of "Fire!" rang from a thousand frenzied men and women as the tobacco warehouses of the city, burning by order of General Ewell, blazed like gigantic torches in the very centres of population and industry. They lighted up the gutters

running with brandy, wine, and whiskey, and exposed the débris of broken windows and stolen goods. Flour-mills and shipping were given to the flames. The air reeked with acrid smoke and stale liquor. To the mad confusion of voices and the roar of fire was now joined the thunder of explosives; for, as General Ewell's forces, which had hitherto held in check the Unionists on the north of the James, prepared to follow the other divisions of Confederates secretly marching out of Richmond, they not only burned the bridges, but blew up the iron-clads. Public buildings and venerable homesteads were sucked up in the conflagration until acres of the doomed city were a mass of seething, hissing, roaring flames, while issuing out of it men and women and little children in their night-clothing rushed for their lives or skirted the borders of it, beside themselves with the lust of plunder. Great clouds of smoke spread a pall between Richmond and the sky, shutting out the steadfast, solemn stars, and rendering the darkness of the unfired portions of the city appalling beyond description.

As the flames spread, bands of ruffians and refugees began to crowd and jostle one another in the quieter thoroughfares. A little after midnight Patty and Virginia were startled by thumpings on the doors and attempts to tear open the windows, and cries for admission.

Peering through the shutters of a darkened upper room, they saw a great crowd assembled, and heard talk of what the house contained, and threats of setting it on fire if the doors remained barred. A man in the crowd threw a bottle of ale against the half-moon window over the front door, and the glass crashed in and the liquor spattered the rabble on the porch. Two or three started to make a ladder of their shoulders for one of their number to climb up and through the opening,

closed, however, on the inside, by a Venetian blind nailed into place, although no impediment to a pair of strong fists.

"I shall have to do it," whispered Virginia to Patty; and the next instant a shot rang out, and the man nearest the window uttered an oath as his arm fell limp at his side.

"There is a regiment inside!" screamed a shrill voice; and the rabble floated into the street towards another house in the neighbourhood.

"They will come back pretty soon, or more like them," said Virginia, trembling with excitement. "I think we had better get mother and Brant down-stairs into the garden. If the house were set on fire, we could never save them where they are. There is the gate near the arbor vitæ into Mr. Vaughn's driveway. We could escape through that, probably, if we had to go out of our own grounds."

"What if they climbed over the wall and found us in the garden?" said Patty, her voice trembling in spite of herself.

"They wouldn't come that way, and they don't want us: they want our things. Besides, we shall be out of sight behind the summer-house."

"Oh, if morning would only come!" exclaimed Patty.

"Well, it surely will," replied Virginia, reassuringly. "And, if we all live till then, I'll find some way to start to Gordon Hall before another night rolls around. Mother and Brant could never live through another night like this."

Virginia explained her plan to the invalids with a composure which she was far from feeling. There was something commanding and strong about her in body and spirit, and her courage and cheerfulness reacted on the others.

Patty and she carried mattresses downstairs, across the court at the back of the house, and half lifted, half dragged them to the foot of the long garden.

The spot Virginia had selected was so retired that it seemed farther from the street than it really was. Behind it was the wall of arbor vitæ which concealed the ice-house, and in front of it a circular summer-house.

The girls went back and forth, a loving exhilaration of purpose making them feel infinitely light of foot and strong. Meanwhile, the street just beyond the high brick wall sounded noisy and tumultuous. Great feathers of burning straw and other light material wafted across the awful darkness, and disappeared. The air was pungent with smoke, and Patty wiped the tears away as she thought of her cousin Brant trying to breathe in it. But, undaunted, the sisters accomplished their preparations.

Virginia now selected a pair of heavy blankets, and put a pillow upon them, and Patty and she placed their mother upon this simple litter. It was a solemn moment to all, as Virginia, gathering up two of the ends, and Patty the others, drew them over their shoulders for additional security, and started out of a room hallowed by years of association.

Some of the old fire of will and energy shone in Mrs. Manners' eyes when her daughters lifted her, as if she entered into the spirit which animated them. Virginia carried the forward end, as the more burdensome one, downstairs; and, as she occasionally glanced back at her mother, she met a tender, admiring smile, comforting and inspiring.

When the difficult task was at length accomplished, and, wrapped in blankets, both invalids were lying upon their mattresses, their medicines and stimulants at hand, and while the sisters sat huddled together with a dim, helpless sense of responsibility and uncer-

tainty combined, they heard a step behind the arbor vitæ. Squeezing Patty's hand to keep still, Virginia stepped softly across a strip of grass and tried to peer through the hedge. The darkness made it impenetrable. But suddenly there was a tiny flash of light, and she saw the face above it—a wonderful face—massive, handsome, leonine, in its yellow splendour. It was Judith.

She glided along, the light appearing and disappearing as it revealed the way, and presently stopped in front of the ice-house. Pulling open the half-closed door which the sisters had left in this position, she threw a large package inside, and went away. She came repeatedly within a couple of hours, and each time brought a heavy armful. Virginia watched with fear for her own treasures and curiosity over Judith's movements. Hardly had her anxiety concerning Judith yielded to her solicitude for her mother and Brant when a burst of light a short distance down the street confirmed her foresight.

A great rabble, with torches, axes, horns, whistles, and firearms of all sorts, surged forward with yells and songs. Those in advance began to scale the brick wall around the Manners place, while others quickly followed. They battered down the doors, tore off the shutters, and a few minutes later Virginia and Patty, peering around the summer-house, saw through the open windows of the great mansion, the rooms of which were still brilliantly lighted, men and women hurrying hither and thither, emptying the bureaus, stripping the beds, ransacking the wardrobes, tearing down the curtains, and throwing the booty out to shouting crowds below. It all happened in an incredibly short time; and then the mob passed on, their songs and screams rising and falling as they sought another imposing residence a block further away.

Overcome by the havoc made in the home to which she had been brought a bride, Mrs. Manners fainted, and lay for hours unconscious.

His removal and the uproar overtaxed Brant's feeble remnant of vitality. It grew more and more difficult for him to breathe the smoky air; as the daylight began to lessen the hideous darkness, his mind wandered.

He talked of his mother and little John. Virginia and Patty felt as if their hearts woud break when he began to talk to their father. "We are not enemies, Uncle Gordon, you and I! That could never be,—never, never—never!" His thin, reedy voice, raised hardly above a whisper, made the words thrillingly emphatic. "'I was a stranger, and ye took me in.' Grandfather, do you hear? It was my Uncle Gordon! We fell side by side—and we're not enemies. He took me in—took me—in. Mother!" throwing up his arms, while a smile shone over his face. He opened his eyes very wide, looked up, sighed, smiled rapturously as he whispered, "I knew you would get here, mother," and with a little gasp passed from the battlefield of life.

North of Richmond, where General Weitzel was in command of the Union forces, the bands played "Yankee Doodle," "Hail, Columbia," and other patriotic airs till long after midnight. Unsuspicious of the withdrawal of the Confederates from the intricate intrenchments in their front, the soldiers finally lay down to catch a few hours' sleep, with the confident expectation of being called into action at daybreak. Sleep and silence had brooded over the camp but a short time, however, when the sound of an explosion put officers and privates on the alert. Almost immediately after a gigantic negro drove through the lines in a cart with the news that Richmond had been evacu-

ated. The illumination flaring up against the sky and indicating a fire of vast extent confirmed his statement.

As the ground over which the troops would have to march into the city was covered with Confederate intrenchments, the advance was delayed till morning, when a scene of mingled desolation and beauty was revealed. The pall overhanging the city was shot with golden light as the day advanced, for the brilliant spring sun shone through it wherever the wind thinned the smoke. In the lower portions of Richmond the fire still raged, while new centres were continually being made by the sparks and showers of flaming straw and other light material wafted on the draft occasioned by the conflagration. The square in front of the capital was crowded with furniture, and hundreds had gathered there from the "Basin" with the hope of breathing purer air.

In the midst of the babel of sound made by the roar of fire, the noise of drays carrying household goods or plunder, the hubbub of rolling barrels, of china, tinware, and boxes hurled from doors and windows, of women and children weeping aloud in their misery as they ran hither and thither, of men cursing or hallooing as they were hindered or furthered in their nefarious purposes, a cry was raised and carried from street to street that the Yankees were coming.

Meanwhile, as soon as it was daylight and while the gloom was still sufficient to render objects indistinct a few yards away, Virginia ventured back to the house to investigate.

Patty ran to meet her when she returned, struck with the majesty, indignation, and despair in her face and bearing.

"There is nothing left there for us to go back to." And she turned and regarded the house with mingled sorrow and disgust. "Filth and ruin are in every

room downstairs, and the bedrooms are stripped. We shall have to keep our dead—and our dying out here, till we can get aid. What's that?" And she pointed to the wall now clearly visible in the growing light. "They have torn it out,—made a great, ugly breach in it." She broke away to examine this new evidence of vandalism.

As she stepped upon the pile of bricks and mortar, and, glancing up and down the street, saw that other homes had been visited by the mob, the courage which sometimes mounts in direct proportion to the extent of disaster returned to her; and she stood transfixed upon the ruined wall like a queen whom nothing can daunt.

Her waving black hair lay in a thick, disordered knot in her neck; her mournful, defiant eyes blazed with the lustre attendant upon the exaltation of every energy of mind and spirit. On either side of her extended the street, arched by majestic trees covered with the ethereal green of budding leaves, while above her hung the golden haze blended of dampness from the river and smoke from the burning districts.

A squad of cavalry galloping around a corner not far away, came down the street towards her. A great hope sprang up. Deliverance was near. Her mother and cousin could be carried to some place of shelter. The next moment the truth burst upon her; for the blue uniforms told her, as the bread riot could not have done, as the conference between General Lee and President Davis could not, as the awful work of the Richmond mob could not, that the evacuation was not only a possibility, but a terrible fact.

Paralysed by the discovery and the shock, she remained motionless; while nearer and nearer came the cavalry-men.

As the officer who rode somewhat in advance beheld the ruined wall and this commanding woman in the



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breach, he thought the picture symbolical of the Confederacy. But the next moment far other thoughts occupied him. Calling a halt, he sprang from his horse. Virginia found herself face to face with Captain Featherstone.

"Can I be of any service to you, Miss Manners?"

His salutation was distant, although it conveyed the most profound respect and consideration; but, in the flash of recognition between them, she perceived on his part a grim loyalty of purpose and passion, in no wise lessened by her parry of his addresses at Gordon Hall.

As she had never hesitated to make such use of a lover as circumstances permitted in good fortune, so she did not hesitate now when her adversity was overwhelming.

"Yes—you can aid me, Captain Featherstone. There is an ice-house in these grounds, full of our treasures, which needs a guard immediately. Can you spare three or four of your men to protect it?"

Captain Featherstone bowed. "I can, and I will. Is there anything else I can do?" A passing light of humour and some more subtle feeling, as if he rejoiced in her dependence on him, flitted over his features, leaving them cold, commanding, and severe,—the typical expression of a military man.

Virginia did not at once reply. She found it difficult, after all, to ask a favour of this man in an affliction that was tearing her very heart in pieces. When she did speak, her words came slowly and monotonously. She could not bear to let him see her grief. "My home was visited and stripped by the mob last night. My mother lies unconscious in the garden, and my cousin, Mr. Brant Manners, of Butler's division"—She turned her head away, and the captain saw her swallow her emotion with proud self-restraint. "We

had him brought here, after the attack on Fort Steadman, as he fell near our lines and beside my father. He died this morning."

Captain Featherstone looked down, and tapped the ground with his foot. He felt overcome. Then, facing about, he ordered three of the men to go on duty at the ice-house. Summoning two others, he commanded one to fetch a doctor to Miss Manners without delay, and the other to stay on guard, subject to her wishes, till relieved. Saluting Virginia again, he turned away, then turned back, and saying, "I shall see you later in the day," mounted, and rode away at the head of his troops.

Soon after, his company galloped into the square in front of the capitol. With his own hands Captain Featherstone raised the stars and stripes over the imposing building in which the Confederate Congress had held its sittings for nearly four years. Once more Richmond flung to the breeze the flag of her first love.

Following this little body of troops under Captain Featherstone, the main army, which had received valuable information from the negro in the cart, proceeded more leisurely to take possession. Their march led them through two lines of abatis and three lines of rifle-pits and earthworks before they could reach the suburbs. At intervals along this part of the route there were small red flags which had been raised by the Confederates to indicate where torpedoes were planted; in their hasty flight they could not stop to pull them up, and thus inadvertently they had preserved the lives of hundreds of the Unionists. The weapons and ammunitions of the fugitive army strewed the road, while shells bursting in the midst of the troops warned them that the peril of their entrance into Richmond was by no means at an end.

When they reached the city, thousands greeted them, but chiefly the negroes and the mob.

Down the slopes of Church Hill and through the valley and up the ascent to the Exchange Hotel the Union forces rode, the bands playing, the swords and bayonets of the soldiers flashing in the April sunlight. The noise of the exploding shells, clouds of smoke, banners of fire, and the sad faces of the vanquished fringed their road.

They took possession of various prominent buildings; but the fire disputed their occupation of others, and continued to feed upon the vitals of the city, consuming banks, newspaper offices, the chief warehouses, the post-office, the very treasury itself.

But, when the sun set on that eventful Monday, the fire was under control, while over Richmond from a hundred roofs and poles and spires floated the stars and stripes. Military rule was established; and the citizens lay down to sleep, if not in happiness and contentment, yet with a sense of profound thankfulness that mob law was at an end.

Far away in the North the bells of innumerable villages, towns, and cities, were ringing in token of the victory,—historic bells in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, in Louisville, Baltimore, and Washington; and the bell in Mulholland, given to the town by Queen Anne, rang out the joyful tale of the refederation soon to be consummated, while from thousands of family altars prayers of gratitude ascended, not alone for victory, but because peace was in sight and families long separated were to be once more united.

## XXIX.

LATE in the afternoon of the following day a steamboat stopped at the Richmond landing, and the gang-plank was hardly in place before old Mr. Manners, holding little John by the hand, stepped off. Cornelia followed closely after, the crowd of loungers paying the involuntary tribute of idlers to an exceedingly beautiful and commanding woman.

But Cornelia saw no one, and her anxiety was evident in her extreme pallor and strained expression.

Colonel and Mrs. Boudinot came on shore last, the colonel as eccentric as ever in his dress, and punctilious to a degree in his attentions to Mrs. Boudinot. A pair of lovers whose fondness survives a half-century is a rare spectacle; and the little old lady with fluffy white hair, peachy cheeks, and brown silk dress excited much favourable comment among the negroes.

"Hi — but she dotes on dat ar ole chap. How finicky he steps off, to be shore! Look at him's gaiters an' ruffles an' drab hat. He's a Quaker or a bridegroom." A giggle spread through the crowd.

The colonel, overhearing these remarks, lifted his gold eyeglasses and stared his critics into silence before helping Mrs. Boudinot into the carriage where the others were already seated.

As the party drove off, little John looked on this side and that in a confused, bewildered way. The tears slowly filled his eyes as he leaned over to his mother, and whispered: "Where's the Souf, mamma? Where's papa?"

Cornelia suppressed a sigh, half a sob. "Papa is not far off, now, darling. And the South — We are in the South. It is all around you."

"Oh!" And John's look as he sank back against his grandfather told volumes of the dissolution of

an airy pageant never again to delight his childish vision.

As they ascended the hill from the river, Colonel Boudinot found his efforts useless to hasten the black man on the box; and, in spite of his anxiety to reach Brant, his attention was absorbed by the havoc, misery, and desolation visible in every direction. Ragged, apathetic soldiers, starved-looking children, women with proud, discouraged faces, and negroes, hilarious, talkative, and ostentatious, lined the streets. Half-burned houses and whole blocks covered with smoking ruins marked the course of the fire in the neighbourhoods through which they passed. Confederate officers stood in disheartened groups about the entrance to the Spottswood Hotel, while Capitol Square showed a lawn on which every spear of the young grass was trodden out of sight. A soft, smoky haze still hung over the city, so that the sunshine wore the dreamy, mellow look of September.

As the travellers approached the Manners mansion, they noticed with amazement the dilapidated condition of the houses along the street. During the war, Cornelia had cherished with both pride and comfort the memory of her only visit to Richmond; and on the way from Washington she had hugged the thought that her son was surrounded by luxury and cared for as tenderly as he could have been in his own home.

As she ascended the steps leading to the fine porch and saw the cracked panels of the door, the broken glass above it, the stains upon the brick floor, as well as the trampled, disorderly aspect of the whole environment, she grasped the truth.

"It looks, father, as though the mob had been here. Oh!" And she clasped her hands against her heart.

Doxy answered their ring, and greeted them with genuine gladness. Cornelia felt momentarily relieved.

But Doxy was deliberate and ceremonious and very old; while her chief thought, after all, was for her young mistresses. She was dazed by the horrors of the siege; and it did not occur to her that the shortest way was the kindest in such an extremity, or that she should tell Mrs. Manners the truth. But, finally, when she had answered every question but the one Cornelia asked over and over, she sighed, and again put her apron to her eyes. "Mr. Brant, Miss Manners,—Mr. Brant"—She sobbed.

"Where is he?" asked Cornelia, almost sternly.

Without speaking, but sobbing as she went, Doxy led the way down the wide hall, lined with the portraits of Manners, Stuarts, and Copleys, fortunately uninjured by the raiders. "It's de same room whar my ole mars'r wuz carried."

Cornelia paused just outside the door, a wave of faintness passing over her, but still incredulous. Doxy could not mean—that!

The travellers entered a room in almost total darkness. The wooden shutters were drawn. "I'll tell my mistisses you'se here," Doxy said, closing the door softly upon them.

The change from the light hall was so sudden that for a moment the little group stood huddled together. But, before the others could grasp the situation, Cornelia knew the meaning of the motionless figure in its uniform, lying on the long library table between the windows.

A wail broke from her. She tore open the shutter, and the slanting beams of the afternoon sun fell upon the light brown hair, the sunken cheeks, the smiling face of her first-born, gentle even after a four years' experience with war.

She knelt beside him, and drew his head to her breast, warming his cold, smiling face with her tears.

John stole up and put his arm around her neck, but for the first time in her life she did not notice him.

"Is it Brant? Is it my brother?" he whispered.

Mrs. Boudinot drew him away, while the two old men, their backs turned to each other, braced themselves austerey, and silently and furtively wiped their falling tears.

The door opened, and Virginia came in. There was not a vestige of colour in her face. Her black hair and eyes, her white dress and the black ribbon at her throat, heightened her pallor.

Her grandfather held out his arms, and with a sigh, as if her heart were breaking, she laid her head on his shoulder, and encircled his quivering, bent form with her arms. She drew away a moment after, tearless, but a great renunciation upon her beautiful, chiselled features. "There seems to be no feeling left in me, grandfather." She approached her aunt Cornelia. "I am very sorry for you, Aunt Cornelia. Brant spoke of his mother at the very last. He thought you were with him, and he died very happy."

Mrs. Manners looked up with streaming eyes. "Is it you, Virginia? Poor Virginia!" And she felt out blindly for the young girl's hand. "How is your mother, dear? How is she bearing her great loss?"

"My mother! Mother died this morning."

Old Mr. Manners groaned. "Gordon and his wife, and Brant!" he exclaimed with all the trembling, pent-up intensity of age. But, straightening his shoulders almost instantly, he said with a solemnity and piety thrilling to the colonel: "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Colonel Boudinot, leading John by the hand, went out, and did not return with the little lad till long after dark.

Her maternal solicitude aroused for her nieces, Mrs. Manners mastered her own grief sufficiently to enter into theirs, and assist and advise them in the new, strange duties they had to meet. Mrs. Boudinot went to the kitchen, to superintend the careless maid whom Doxy had persuaded to help her in this crisis; towards midnight there was some order in the sleeping apartments, and the sisters, with older hearts to lean on for the first time in many days, yielded to their exhaustion, and slept profoundly.

The next morning, while Cornelia was alone with her dead, recalling the years of a life blameless and full of tender memories which she could cherish with pride, the door opened, and her husband, his arm in a sling, stood before her.

"O Rufus, Rufus! Thank God! Thank God!"

Mrs. Manners and Brant were laid beside General Manners in Hollywood. The double funeral called together a large number of both Confederates and Unionists; and so profound was the realisation of family affliction on this occasion that political differences, critical as the moment was, were forgotten.

Four days after the evacuation, rumours of Lee's surrender began to reach the city. Colonel Manners felt restless as well as sad. The loss of his son on the very eve of victory grew harder and harder to bear. His broken arm did not prevent him from going about, and his disappointment over being off duty on account of it increased as he heard stories of the retreat. The crowning experience of the war had been denied him, and in after years it stood out as the greatest privation of his entire military career.

### XXX.

**W**HEN Captain Featherstone again approached the breach in the wall where he had perceived Virginia on his entry into Richmond, the grounds wore a deserted appearance. The soldiers he had placed on guard were nowhere to be seen.

Riding through the gap to explore the lower end of the extensive garden, and hearing voices as he came near the arbor vitæ, he pushed through the tall hedge, and discovered his men.

"How much longer do you think you will be needed here?" he inquired.

"We emptied the ice-house for Miss Manners an hour ago, captain. We have got a prisoner inside, though."

"Fetch him out."

One of the men opened the door, and Judith climbed up. She was dressed like a Southern mammy, and in spite of her recent experiences, her turban and white apron looked clean. The gold hoops in her ears were no brighter than her eyes. About her whole mien was something so unconcerned and majestic that the officer felt surprised and indignant at what he considered a joke perpetrated against a respectable woman.

"Tell me your story," he said, addressing her.

"I ain't got no particler story. I tossed some of my t'ings down thar de night of de riot, an' Miss Manners, she 'clar dey se hers. She tuk 'em, an' yore men shet me up. I t'ought I'd be of some 'count ef the Yankees got Richmond. But you'se all alike,— Norf an' South! You'se bof against cullud folks."

"We are both for law and order. The sooner you learn that, the better. I suppose you stole Miss Manners's things the night of the riot, eh?"

"Who stole my people? Who stole de work of dese

hands sence I wuz ole enough to tote a white man's baby? Ef I stole till de day of jedgment, I cyant mek up what's ben tuk f'm me. Yo' needn't talk to me 'bout stealin! Humph!" She folded her arms and confronted the captain, while so grim was her mien, so implacable her expression, that a tremor crept over him of what might have resulted, had Virginia met her alone and disputed the contents of the ice-house.

He was about to dismiss her, when there was the sound of wheels in the lane behind the brick wall; a moment after Moses scaled it, viewing with a mixture of fear and conciliation the situation. He saluted Captain Featherstone, however, with much self-possession; while the officer, in his turn, recognising the negro who had brought the first information of the evacuation, greeted him good-naturedly.

"Well, my man, what are you prowling about here for?"

"I'se cum fer my wife, Miss' Plumdiddie."

"Are you his wife?" the captain inquired of Judith.

"Yaas, sir, I is."

"Well, go along with you, and don't let me hear of you again. And you, Moses," he continued, "you'd better report to General Weitzel at once. It is his purpose to reward you for the information you gave this morning."

Moses smiled indifferently. "I'se seed him. I'se got tickets dis moment in dis yere pocket," slapping his breast, "fer Washington, fer Miss' Plumdiddie an' me—an' a hundred dollahs in gold—guv'ment gold! Hurrah fer de Union!"

The men laughed. Judith tossed her head scornfully. Mounting to the top of the wall by means of a step which the soldiers made with their bayonets, she alighted on the other side in Moses' arms. As he drove her down the lane, he chuckled, softly, to him-

self. "A hundred dollahs, Judith,—tousans of dollahs! We'll set up in Washington, an' b'm by we'll hev a bigger crowd er darkies follerin' us den we had in de mine. De only t'ing I regret is dat I didn't catch dat feller you nussed, an' choke him dead."

"Yo' mustn't neber lay hands on him, Moses. He's de only one I eber met who see bof sides of de question. I wouldn't hurt a hyar of his head after dat 'xperience in de Shenandoah."

"All right, Judith. I feel fergivin'. Dere's good times ayead fer you an' me. G'dap!" And, flicking his horse, he turned in the direction of the Virginia Central Railroad.

Captain Featherstone dismissed the guard with the exception of one soldier whom he ordered to patrol the grounds, for he had no intention of abandoning the protection of Virginia till the military occupation of the city was fully organised. And having realised, moreover, on reflection, that there could be no possibility of an interview till after her cousin's funeral, he made no immediate attempt to see her.

When he did venture to call, it was with very little hope that he would be admitted. But Doxy, who answered his ring, replied that Miss Manners was at home, and led him to the drawing-room.

The train of circumstances under which his acquaintance with Virginia had begun and culminated gave him, he was aware, the appearance of taking a mean advantage. He found himself, moreover, in a state of mind and purpose which on theory he would have declared to be impossible. That he should want to press an engagement upon a woman who by every act had declared that she did not consider herself bound amazed him. Yet this was precisely his state of mind.

He sat down in a corner farthest from the door, where he could watch her enter. Exposure to sun and

wind had given him a swarthy look, which was increased by the steel-grey colour of his eyes. He was tall and lithe,—a stern, cold man in appearance, but with a fiery, passionate nature, which, although under the control of an iron will, became visible on rare occasions. The surrender of himself to Virginia in the hospital had been absolute; and as he sat in the forlorn room, dismantled of its curtains and ornaments by the mob, its once beautiful carpet spotted with tobacco and wine, its walls defaced, the long mirror broken, even the fire lighted earlier in the day gone out, he fancied with all the tenderness of an accepted lover his delight in taking her away from this ruined home and placing her in another of her own choice and devising.

Meanwhile Virginia had come in so quietly that he was unaware of her presence. But, as he heaved an involuntary sigh over the futility of his dream, he looked up and saw her. He sprang to his feet apologetically.

She appeared to observe him with that discrimination concerning people which he had noticed in her before, but inclined her head as if she might never have met him.

He placed a chair, and she sat down, while he drew another near her. He glanced at her once or twice, but could gather no clew to her thoughts or feelings. There was a gentle, almost apathetic air about her, very disarming; but underneath it was the dignity which, allied to her great beauty, was her distinguishing characteristic, and which had always given even to her coquetry a value beyond her intentions.

"Do you excuse me for calling upon you to-day, Miss Manners?"

She gave a slight start, suppressed a sigh, which he thought one of relief on perceiving that he did not ad-

dress her familiarly, but looked away as she replied, "My sister and I are under deep obligation to you, Captain Featherstone, for your kindness since your entry into Richmond." She paused, then turned to him, an appreciative light in her otherwise inexplicable black eyes. "You proved yourself a friend to us in a time of the greatest need. You will always be a welcome guest."

He regarded her intently. He could see the hard beating of her heart stir her dress. Did she care, after all, or was she still affected by the excitement and fatigue of the past few days? A longing as intense as the struggle between life and death stirred him.

"Is that all — Virginia?" His voice was husky with feeling.

She moved uneasily. There was a barely perceptible lifting of her eyebrows, of her haughty, beautiful chin. "What else could there be between a Confederate and a Unionist?" She spoke without feeling, but with lofty decision.

"Ah! Virginia, there is no such barrier any longer. The war is virtually ended." He leaned towards her.

"Our cause is lost!" She spoke despairingly. "But it will live in my thought forever — forever! There is room for nothing else there. Be my friend, Captain Featherstone — just that, please." She held out her hands beseechingly.

He took them. How cold they were, — how little! "Tell me one thing, Virginia, tell me frankly, honestly. You owe it to me. I do not intend to persecute you. God knows I could die for you! If there had never been a South and a North, tell me, would you be willing to let our engagement stand? Could — you — have loved me — then?"

She passed her hand over her forehead, regarded him with some perplexity and with a kind of absorbed

weariness as if she were in doubt, but answered finally, although with an abstraction which set her apart from him, notwithstanding his desire and effort to have it otherwise: "Yes—I should let the engagement stand." There was a quiver of physical weakness in her voice as she continued: "Something seems to be the matter with me, Captain Featherstone. I have no feeling about any one or anything. I think—I think day and night—of our lost cause—of father—of mother! But I can't feel any more. I don't know myself!" She put her hands to her cheeks, and looked at him pitifully. "If I felt at all—I am sure I should feel very sorry for you—very sorry!"

Captain Featherstone moved a little apart from her, afraid for his self-control. He perceived that her emotional nature was prostrated, although her clever mind was automatically alert. He longed to take her in his arms; but he realised that it would be sacrilege at such a moment, and, lifting her hand, he kissed it and went out. Loyal as he was to the Union and the various Federal issues which the war implied, he felt that this Southern woman was the product of social conditions unique in their charm, and that for him, on her account, the only attitude henceforth possible towards the broken, impoverished, desolated South when the war should be ended would be one of peace and good will.

During the eventful days immediately following the evacuation, the closing scenes in the history of General Lee's army were thrilling and pathetic.

By midnight of April 2 the Confederate army had abandoned the capital; but from almost the very beginning of its flight it was baffled by the sagacity of a man who had neither blundered nor faltered in his policy during the entire year of the wonderful and final campaign of the Army of the Potomac.

Lest this arm of his tremendous military equipment should be stripped at the last moment of some of its hardly earned triumph by the assistance of the army of the West, whose track from the Mississippi to North Carolina was strewn with laurels, General Grant was pleased to be able to hold Sherman's victorious forces at Goldsboro while the pursuit of the Confederates by Meade and Sheridan was in progress.

Between the 2d and 9th of April, therefore, an observer stationed at Goldsboro might have sought in vain for privacy. The town, the suburbs, and the adjoining forests swarmed with Union soldiers. The trains going west were appropriated to carry hard tack, hay, and oats for the pursuing army. They returned laden with refugees and wounded men.

While rations for the Federal army stationed in Goldsboro were abundant, provisions were so costly that many families were without food, and citizens once wealthy were fed at the expense of the United States government. The horses and mules, the carriages and carts, of the region for miles in every direction, were confiscated. At the street corners stood groups of Union privates, trading jewelry of all descriptions, as well as souvenirs in silver cut from trays and waiters, vegetable dishes and urns. Others were engaged in selling mules at five dollars apiece. Some of the most prominent citizens wandered aimlessly hither and thither, their residences having been seized for military quarters. Everything in and about Goldsboro indicated on the one hand the encampment for an indefinite period of a large and victorious army, and on the other a region reduced to the last extremity of poverty.

Between Goldsboro and Petersburg, a hundred and fifty miles away, unrest and discouragement filled every heart lest at any moment Sherman's army should

## The Grapes of Wrath

receive orders to join General Grant; but the apprehension was groundless, for on the night of the 2d of April Petersburg also was evacuated and burned.

Meanwhile General Grant was massing his forces south-west of the besieged cities.

Before marching up the Appomattox, General Lee concentrated his army midway between Richmond and Petersburg, preparatory to turning west, where he hoped to meet provisions for his hungry troops. By daylight, having advanced sixteen miles, he was light of heart because retreat so well begun might permit him to unite with Johnston and negotiate terms of peace honourable to the Confederacy.

Throughout that long spring day the retreat and pursuit continued, Lee urging his veterans along the north side of the Appomattox, Grant with an ever-increasing army along the south bank.

Twenty-two miles further west, to Amelia Court-house, the Confederate veterans fled,—foot-sore, hungry, ragged, but of good courage, because their scanty rations of parched corn would there be exchanged for food in abundance. Alas for their hopes! The train of supplies which General Lee was to have received there did not stop, through some blunder, but hurried on to Richmond, to be consumed in the great fire.

Exhausted, and obliged to forage on the surrounding country, a land chiefly of pine barrens, the Confederates halted during the 4th and 5th of April, the hope that had hitherto animated them fading into despair because of this calamitous delay. Sheridan meanwhile intrenched his infantry across their path farther west and maintained his cavalry in readiness for action, while Meade's forces closed in upon their rear.

General Lee could have but one hope in this extremity,—to return to the north bank of the Appomattox,

which he had crossed to reach Amelia Court-house. To accomplish this, he left Amelia Court-house at nightfall on the 5th, and flanked both Meade and Sherman. But his train, which moved in advance of him, was overtaken, many wagons were lost, and hundreds of his depleted following were made prisoners; while the entire Army of the Potomac, having now joined forces, began the final pursuit of the pitiful and heroic remnant of the Army of Virginia.

Crook's division charged the retreating Confederates, and was repulsed; but, as Crook's object was to detain them, he enabled General Custer to gain on them farther along the road, pierce their line, destroy four hundred more of their wagons, capture guns, and cut off Ewell's corps. Meanwhile the invincible Sixth Corps arrived upon the scene.

Separated from Lee's main army, Ewell found himself enclosed between the cavalry of Sheridan and the indomitable Sixth Corps; and, perceiving that there was no possible chance of escape, his veterans laid down their arms.

On that fatal 6th of April, General Lee lost not only General Ewell and four other generals, but six thousand of an army the larger part of which was already disabled by fatigue and hunger. Notwithstanding this, and in spite of the overwhelming odds, his courage to all appearance unfaltering, and while presenting a countenance showing little trace of this terrific resistance to an implacable fate, he upheld the spirit of his men, gave new impulse to feet tottering under the exhaustion of starvation and sleeplessness, and pressed on towards his goal. Hour by hour along that last march towards the Appomattox men fell in their tracks; and thousands, grown too weak to carry arms, threw away their muskets, but struggled forward and crossed the river after dark. When daylight came

on the 7th, they had left the Unionists far in the rear of their van, although their own rear had only just crossed the Appomattox, and had not succeeded in burning the bridges. But having fed on buds and twigs of trees, and rations consisting of a handful of parched corn, they were now too faint to move with any rapidity. Their horses and mules, gaunt with hunger, fell by the way. Day by day, almost hour by hour of this desperate flight, they had beaten off the Union skirmishers; but at length, like autumn leaves, they sank at every step along the path of their awful hegira, leaving a drift of hapless and heart-broken humanity to mark the course of a retreat having but one parallel in the nineteenth century. The remnant plodded on, half-crazed, straggling in panting, ragged, tottering squads over roads seldom used and through an underbrush of oaks and pines.

Towards night of this weary 7th of April, and just after he had intrenched a few miles north of his pursuing foe, General Lee received a letter from General Grant, in which the Union commander asked for the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. In his reply General Lee inquired what terms General Grant would offer "on condition of its surrender," but, when the darkness set in, broke up camp, started on, and by noon of the next day struck a better road. At dark the head of this little army reached Appomattox Court-house; and their courage revived, because food in plenty was now but a few miles distant, and the mountains to which they looked for refuge were within a day's march.

The bands played when night set in, and the soldiers fell asleep in the belief that they were on the eve of better days. Meanwhile letters between Grant and Lee had again been exchanged, but they contained no suggestion of compromise on either side. If the sol-

diers slept, the officers were apprehensive; and their fears were confirmed later by the sound of cannon at their front. Moreover, soon after they had bivouacked, the information was brought in that their outlet towards the west, through Lynchburg, was closed by Sheridan. There was but one thing to attempt therefore: they must try to cut a way through his lines.

To do this, Gordon, at daybreak, formed a front of two thousand men, and Longstreet guarded the rear with the meagre remnant of his division; while the remainder of the Army of Virginia, too weak to shoulder arms, accompanied the wagon train sheltered between the two lines.

When the Army of Virginia deployed before Sheridan, his cavalry was stationed near Appomattox Court-house. As the Confederates charged, his troopers dismounted. They appeared to retreat while maintaining an unbroken front, but meanwhile thousands of infantry were forming behind them into solid lines. When the infantry were in position, like the curtain rolling aside to reveal a stage, the cavalry wheeled swiftly and mounted, exposing to the view of the astonished Confederates such a wall of bayonets that the hope of that gaunt handful of veterans turned to despair. Their thin lines began to waver; they broke; and Sheridan's cavalry was preparing to charge when a white flag was waved before General Custer, who led them.

General Gordon rode over to request a suspension of hostilities; for Lee had already sent a messenger to Grant, asking for an interview on the basis of the surrender of the Army of Virginia, insisted upon by Grant in his second letter.

The two great commanders met in a house at Appomattox Court-house.

Lee's manner, though grave and even taciturn, re-

mained calm, and betrayed no hint of wounded pride. Whatever his thoughts were, his expression was impassive, his bearing dignified. He was dressed in full uniform, and wore the sword presented by the State of Virginia.

During the night previous to the surrender, Grant had been very ill, and with great effort was making his way to the head of the Union army when he received Lee's message. So intense was his joy over its significance that discomfort and pain fled, and he hastened forward to Appomattox Court-house. As he had intended to be on the field all day, he wore a soldier's blouse, his shoulder-straps alone indicating his rank. His expression was reticent, but blended with modesty and sincerity and imbued with sympathy, revealing traits of character rare and beautiful in a man who was to take his place in history as one of the great military leaders of the world. The simplicity of his dress, his manner, and his greeting was heightened by the presence of his staff, a large portion of whom were present during the entire conference.

Three days after this epochal interview the Army of Northern Virginia made its last parade. The soldiers marched to a spot near Appomattox Court-house, "where they staked arms and deposited accoutrements." A few hours later, and riding his iron-grey horse, Traveler, his faithful companion throughout the war, General Lee took his departure for Richmond, watched in sadness and devotion by thousands of his followers, his parole and theirs accepted in exchange for liberty.

## XXXI.

**W**HEN little John first met his father, he turned away with a look of disappointment as absolute as the one in which he had summarised the loss of his ideal concerning the South. In the boy's fancy lingered a vision of a tall, fair man, youthful in appearance, kin in some way to his own childhood. Who was this weather-beaten, bearded giant who appropriated his mother so that he had repeatedly to claim her attention by a thousand innocent, jealous devices,— his mother who had hitherto belonged to him alone! John resented it all, and scorned and shunned his father for a week. Then the glamour of presents of battered bullets, of a Liliputian sword, of a soldier's cap, of jaunts to see historic places, and romps of a kind appealing to the sturdier side of his nature won him, and the dream-picture faded, and his father became his hero. He, too, went about with his arm in a sling, a bunch of shavings tied under his chin for a long, pointed beard, and some military buttons sewed on his jacket. He talked a great deal about war, learned to like Richmond, and didn't want to go home when the time arrived for the journey north.

Towards the end of May Judge Manners had sufficiently adjusted the affairs of his nieces to make it possible for them to leave the South for an indefinite period. Both homesteads were placed in charge of competent persons; and, although the estate had sustained heavy losses, Virginia and Patty fared better than many of their friends, for their most precious heirlooms in silver, jewelry, books, and pictures, were uninjured, and their land promised in time to yield them a comfortable and even ample income. But, although so young, their appearance and attitude towards the things of youth showed how deeply the

loss of their parents, the horrors of the siege of Richmond, and the downfall of the Confederacy had affected them.

The Mulholland girls hardly recognised Virginia when they saw her. Her figure, developed almost to robustness when she had gone away in December, was slender. There was the same indescribable gracious swing in her walk, but her step was languid. The old nonchalance of expression had disappeared. She seldom smiled. There was a pathos in her black eyes, a passive weariness imprinted upon those features which Mary and Catherine had called haughty that melted every trace of lingering resentment, and they welcomed her back like a dear sister.

Patty had borne the strain better; but she was so thin, too, that she looked almost like a child. Loving memories were in the background of the Mulholland thought of her; and, when mothers who had lost their only sons saw her, or girls—and there were many—whose lovers slept on the battlefields of Patty's native State met her, there was something so innocent, so sweet, yet so proud and so resolute about her that she commanded both their sympathy and respect. As for the black dresses they wore, no one noticed these; for was not nearly ever house, every heart, in mourning?

It seemed the most natural thing in the world that Mrs. Manners, too, should be dressed in black, although she had always worn gowns of such pretty, bright colours. So universal was the sorrow in the North, where one-tenth of all the men had been engaged in the war, that a kind of Spartan firmness of demeanor settled upon the women; and they talked little of their grief, and made much of the victory which had blossomed out of a nation's sacrifice.

Virginia and Patty exhibited unexpected powers of self-repression and control. Even Mr. Jared Manners,

whose feeling towards the South from the beginning to the end of the war had been uncompromising, became very tender and forbearing towards them. He offered them every inducement to spend their winters in Washington with him, and to settle down, when his senatorial term should expire, in his home in Boston, where he and his wife dispensed hospitality that was palatial for the times. But the girls clung to their Aunt Cornelia; while Virginia, first to her grandfather's surprise and finally to his complete surrender, devoted herself so considerately and gently to him that he wanted her with him continually. She spent, in consequence, most of her time on the farm, listening to stories of her father's boyhood, visiting every nook with which some memory of him was connected, and reading the daily paper aloud to the old man as they sat together after tea on the porch. Often the paper would drop from her hands, and her solemn, majestic gaze would rest upon the Jersey pines shutting in the view towards the south. Who can tell what thoughts were hers? At such times her grandfather would take her hand between his furrowed, wrinkled ones, and try to divert her with tales of his own youth, when the New Jersey plantations were much like those of Maryland and Kentucky.

In May, Hannah's husband returned to the cement house, whither she herself had gone soon after the evacuation of Richmond. He came back to her a major-general, by brevet, for his brilliant services during the bombardment of Petersburg, and in consequence was the greatest man in Mulholland.

Hannah did not meet him in Mulholland on his arrival. Sylvester went in her stead. Her heart was too full of expectation, love, and happiness to let the world see her joy.

How long and how short that day was on which her

soldier was expected! She led two lives all through those happy hours. She was here, there, and everywhere to assure herself that the order was perfect in the big square rooms, which were not much changed, though freshened with white curtains and a few luxurious appointments. A handsome table was set in the back parlour, the windows of which overlooked the blooming fields on which her mother had gazed hardly a year before with despondency and discouragement. Hannah had put aside her mourning, and upon her bosom was pined a bunch of cherry blossoms from one of the gnarled old trees with their moss-embroidered trunks under which Haldane had bade her good-bye when he went to war. The syringas were white with flowers. The strawberry-beds, covering many acres just beyond the stone wall surrounding the garden, were gay with their little white stars with hearts of gold.

The sun sank lower and lower towards the oak grove in the west. The drift of clouds just above the trees turned pink as the great yellow ball, softened with the haze creeping in from the sea, met their embrace; and over the whole sky spread innumerable cloudlets of rosy splendour. The birds began to twitter and croon in the thickets and trees; and Hannah went to the door of the quaint hall with its fantastic sketches, which Sylvester had again begun to copy, to look down the lane for the hundredth time. How still, how sweet, how pure—yet how ecstatic was that May evening!

The muffled thud of horses' hoofs fell upon her expectant ear, then voices; and, just as the breeze sprang up with something so fragrant, so persuasive, so balmy in its touch, her general came in sight.

As Hannah felt towards her lover, so did Catherine towards hers. The Mulholland girls belonged to a time long since old-fashioned, but fashions come back;

and who can tell but that again maidens will prefer to cover with a veil of silence and reticence meetings at which no third person was ever intended to be present?

Frank returned a simple lieutenant. Mary met him at the train, and brought him his mother's love and blessing and assurance that she was able to wait in patience, no matter how many hours, till he had seen Catherine. Mary left him at the corner where her own street crossed the wider, handsomer one on which Catherine lived; and Frank walked the short distance remaining with such happiness at his heart as he had not known in many months. How familiar the brick wall appeared, surrounding the Schuyler grounds! Now that he saw it once more, he felt as if he had hardly been gone a day. How like some of the Virginia mansions this substantial, aristocratic New Jersey homestead looked! How still the street was! Not a person in sight. How fresh, how radiant the young leaves were! and how mellow and warm the sunlight as it spread a golden halo under the trees!

Many of the windows of the Schuyler house were open, but no one was in sight. The curtains in Catherine's room were drawn back, but she did not fill the empty space between them. Where was she,—near? She must be near. Frank's step grew quicker, the flush on his brown cheek deepened. He opened the iron gate. How loud the click of the latch! Surely, Catherine must have heard it! Where was she? How his step resounded on the brick walk! and how gay the solemn box on either side looked, with its tiny sprays of new green! He went up the steps, his eye glancing involuntarily back and forth at the long French windows on either side of the door. Could Catherine be away, after all! He reached up to lift the brass knocker; but the knocker drew away from him, the door was flung wide open, and there stood Catherine,

like a lily in her white dress, her beautiful face up-turned, a still loveliness and joy in her eyes, in her smile. And she leaned towards him; and there, on the threshold of her home and the happiness of a long life, he took her in his arms, and their hearts were at rest, never to be divided again.

As one soldier after another returned to Mulholland, the fervour of enthusiastic patriotism increased. For weeks there was little talk of anything but the war and its results. The Mulholland tavern never had such a run of custom; the post-office was a centre for all the born story-tellers for miles around. The wagons in front of the stores blocked the way half across the streets; and horses that had come from miles further inland enjoyed such a rest as they had never experienced before in Mulholland, because their owners lingered over the counters, listening to yarns and thrilling accounts of peninsular battles, of blockades, of the opening of the Mississippi.

On the day the army was formally disbanded, Timothy Steevens gave the school-children a holiday; and he and Thomas Robotham went to New York to see a panorama of Gettysburg.

In every home there was a brave showing of joy and gratitude for a Union preserved; but in some, behind closed doors, mothers and sweethearts spent many hours upon their knees, praying for resignation.

Cornelia's husband came in one morning from his office at an unexpected moment. He never crossed the threshold of his peaceful, orderly home without a sense of devout thankfulness that he could lead once more the simple life of a citizen. The silence everywhere struck him with sudden lonesomeness. John was trying his first term at a dame's school, and the judge missed him. But he missed his wife more. He went from one room to another to find her,—for she was always at

home these days,—and at length softly opened the door of that room to which their eldest son would never return.

Cornelia was there on her knees, examining a worn streak in the carpet, the tears streaming down her cheeks. She looked up as her husband paused on the threshold; and, pointing in this moment of the full revelation of her sorrow to the floor, she said: "This is where he stepped, Rufus. This is the mark of his feet! Oh, my son,—my son!" And, hiding her face against the bed, sobs such as the judge had never heard from her before broke upon his ear.

The summer glided away, and by November the war was a reality of the past alone. The army, like some stream swollen in the spring, had shrunk to the small limits of the regular service. Prosperity came back in a great wave to replenish the depleted resources of the nation; and, when the President's Proclamation for a National Thanksgiving was made, it met with a national response. All over the land, sons and daughters returned to the homesteads of their fathers, many travelling hundreds of miles to unite in family thanksgiving.

Old Mr. Manners' son Robert, whom he had not seen since '48, returned from California. Judge Manners' family went home to the farm to take dinner. Senator Jared Manners and his wife came from Washington. Colonel and Mrs. Boudinot also accepted the old planter's invitation.

That last Thursday in November was a mellow, golden day. Winter seemed still far away. Although fires were burning in the deep fireplaces of the farm-house, the windows were open. The frosts had been so light that the grass looked like April. If it had not been for the bare trees, November would have appeared like the harbinger of summer.

Virginia and Patty and Maria, together with Doxy, now Maria's bosom friend, had trimmed the old house with evergreens and holly; and, though the young Southerners shed many a tear in secret, they accepted the inevitable condition with a sweetness and equanimity that made all the Manners family tender and considerate in talk of the war when they were present.

One carriageful after another arrived, and the aged father was on the porch to receive his children. They gathered in a wide circle around the ample hearth to exchange their first greetings; and Robert, with his wonderful tales of California and the wealth he had accumulated, filled the time till dinner was announced.

They entered the dining-room with the informality common to American families in the sixties, but each had a seat beside some one especially near and dear. Virginia's grandfather insisted that she should sit at his right hand, and all were touched by their mutual devotion. Little John had captured Patty hours before; Colonel Boudinot, deeply impressed with Mrs. Jared Manners, secured a seat beside her. Judge Manners hobnobbed with his brother Robert; and, Cornelia finding herself beside her mother, they clasped hands under the table, like two young girls. As for Mr. Jared Manners, he was such a big man, and his conversation was of such general interest, as it always bore more or less on affairs at Washington, that it seemed eminently fitting he should sit at one end of the table and carve the gigantic turkey.

When the preliminary bustle of sitting down had subsided, the aged patriarch spread his hands. Every head was bowed as the venerable voice, shaking with the weight of years and the emotion of a deeply loving nature, often bereaved and as often rising to the sublime faith of a Christian, thanked the Giver of all mercies. Each heart responded, in tears indeed, but yet in the spirit of true thanksgiving.

They sat a long time at the table; but, when they had finished, the family history was all caught up, and they returned to the parlour with that unspoken but deep satisfaction known only in homesteads where, in spite of adversity, all the more, indeed, because of sorrow, there is the consciousness both proud and humble that the family tree is sound to the core, and that each branch, however closely pruned, has flourished.

While the talk went on around the fire, piled high with hickory logs, as the sun set and the air grew chilly, a glance shot between the colonel and his host, and pretty soon the two old men stole away to meet a few minutes later, as if by the merest chance, on opposite sides of the picket-fence.

The autumnal splendour had faded from the vines. The trees looked naked and cold against the evening sky. The evergreens grouped in solemn stateliness near the Boudinot mansion were already black in the departing light. The colonel lighted his cigar, and Mr. Manners his pipe; and with their faces towards the west, now a clear blaze of orange and purple, they smoked some time in silence.

"There is going to be a change in the weather," at length remarked the old farmer.

"Yes," said the colonel, removing his cigar. "Those clouds indicate wind. I knew this mild spell couldn't last."

"Well," said the farmer, meditatively, "I am glad it lasted through to-day. It has been a happy day, in spite of Gordon and his wife and Brant not being here. No separation seems long to me any more. My days and years glide on like a swift stream. It seems but a moment before we shall all be there, as we have all been here; and it will be just as natural there as here."

The colonel's eyes were critical, yet wistful. "It

seems far away to me," he said. "I don't like to think of it."

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow," repeated Mr. Manners, meditatively.

"That is true; but, all the same, I hope I shall live to be fourscore and far beyond. Why, I feel as young as I ever did!" The colonel fidgeted as if anxious to change the conversation. "Don't you think John favours me, Mr. Manners?" he asked. "I'd like to think he did."

"Now that you speak of it, I don't know but he does," replied the old man, although in tones which failed to carry conviction.

"I hope he will live to be the father of sons as manly and capable as yours, Mr. Manners. Girls are all very well, and Cornelia is precious beyond comparison; but see what a crown of glory your sons are to you! It makes me feel left out of the succession in some way."

"My boys have been good sons, every one; and I have been blessed." Mr. Manners brushed a tear away.

"I might as well acknowledge one more thing, first as last," said the colonel, hesitating as if it cost him the greatest effort. "It is a consolation, in one sense, that I haven't a son, since the war ended as it did; for he might have taunted me with having been a Copper-head. I made a mistake. I saw it when I was in Richmond, but I don't intend to admit it to any one but you."

Mr. Manners looked at him steadfastly, and in that deep-set gaze there was the strength of a lifelong friendship. "The war is over. Forget your former belief, and rejoice in your new political faith. We all make mistakes. Nobody in this world, it seems to

me, has made more than I have." A shiver crept through his bent frame. "Hadn't we better go back to the folks?"

Colonel Boudinot took his neighbour's hand in a long, silent grasp; and side by side, with heads bowed in thought, the two old men returned to the Thanksgiving party.

THE END.



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